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POET LORE

WORLD LITERATURE

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MIGUEL DE CERVANTES
GEORGE H. DAUGHERTY, JR.
GUSTAVO ADOLFO BECQUER
HEINRICH VON KLEIST
LEO FERRERO
PEDRO SALINAS
VICTOR HUGO
ALEXANDER PETOFI
STANTON A. COBLENTZ
AND OTHERS

SPRING, 1939

POET LORE

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PEDRO SALINAS was born in Madrid in 1891. He has been, since 1936, Professor of Spanish at Wellesley College. In Spain he has collaborated on the principal literary magazines: **Prometeo, Espana, Revista de Occidente** and others. He has published a book of stories, VISPERA DEL GOZO (1926). His volumes of poetry are: PRESAGIOS (1923), SEGURO AZAR (1929), FABULA Y SIGNO (1929), LA VOZ A TI DEBIDA (1933), RAZON DE AMOR (1936), ERROR DE CALCULO (1938). Miss Eleanor Turnbull translated into English some selections from his first three volumes, under the title LOST ANGEL AND OTHER POEMS, published by the John Hopkins University Press in 1938.

Leo Ferrero (1903-1933) was a poet, playwright and essayist. His book, **L'Amerique, Miroir grandissant de l'Europe**, an excerpt of which appears in the present issue, has been edited and published posthumously. His parents were Guglielmo Ferrero, the internationally known historian, and Gina Lombroso, one of the most illustrious women among Italy's intellectuals.

Alexander Petöfi (1823 - 1849) is the lyric and national poet of Hungary. The revolution of 1848 inspired him with **Talpra Magyar** (Up, Magyar), the Hungarian **Marseillaise.**

Anne - Elizabeth, Princess Brancova, Comtesse Mathieu de Noailles (1876-1933), Greek on her mother's side, Rumanian on her father's side, and French by education, has published several collections of poetry.

Bernd Wilhelm Heinrich von Kleist (1777 - 1811) the German Romanticist, is chiefly known as an author of plays and stories. A scion of a family long prominent in German literature and in Prussian military affairs, possessed of a powerful dramatic genius, but handicapped by a sickly body and an erratic spirit, he spent his short life in wandering from place to place and shifting from one career to another. Finding peace and satisfaction nowhere, constantly oppressed by pecuniary need, and finally broken in mind and spirit by the insult which his fatherland was suffering under the domination of the Napoleonic régime, this patriotic poet found death by his own hand at Wansee, near Berlin, on November 21, 1811. In Switzerland he began, and in his native Prussia he completed his comedy, **The Broken Jug.** On March 2, 1808, **The Broken Jug** was produced as "a comedy in three acts" in the Weimar Theatre under the direction of Goethe. It was a complete failure. That Goethe was in part the innocent cause of this failure cannot be gainsaid. But Kleist became exceedingly bitter and charged that Goethe had purposely caused the fiasco. It was in Hamburg in 1820 that **The Broken Jug** began its successful parade across the German stage. It is still today, and will probably continue to be, one of the all too few excellent comedies in German literature. American readers who wish to learn more about this comedy and the dramatic genius of its author would do well to make the acquaintance of the very readable and dependable volume of Professor John C. Blankenagel, **The Dramas of Heinrich von Kleist** (1931).

The Judge of the Divorce Court

By Miguel de Cervantes

Translated from the Spanish
By Willis Knapp Jones

Cast

The Judge
The Court Clerk
The Attorney
An Old Man
Mariana, *his wife*
A Soldier
Guiomar, *his wife*
A Doctor
Aldonza de Minjaca, *his wife*
A Burden-Bearer
The Musicians

(*Enter* The Judge *and two others with him who are the* Clerk *and the* Attorney. The Judge *takes his seat. Enter an* Old Man *and* Mariana, *his wife.*)

Mariana. Inasmuch as His Honor the judge of the court of divorce is now upon his bench in the court, I'll stay. From now on I'm going to remain inside or outside. From this time forth I shall be free from petitions and excises, like the sparrow hawk.

Old Man. For God's sake, Mariana, don't grind out your business in so floury a style. Speak apace, for the sake of the passion through which our Lord passed. Look how you have the whole neighborhood deafened by your noise, and since you have His Honor the Judge before you, you can tell him your appeal in a little less volume.

Judge. What dispute do you bring, good people?

Mariana. Your Honor, divorce, divorce, and more divorce, even a thousand more times divorce!

Judge. From whom? and why, Madame?

MARIANA. From whom? Why, from the old man that is here before you.

JUDGE. On what grounds?

MARIANA. Because I can't endure his impertinences nor be constantly on the alert to cure all his infirmities which are without number. My parents did not bring me up to be a nurse or to look after the sick. I brought a very worthwhile dowry to this bag of bones, which gripes me all the days of my life. When I got into his power my face shone like a mirror, and now I have a face as long as a yard of wrinkled black cloth. Your Honor, un-marry me if you don't want me to go hang myself. Look, look at the furrows I have all over this face, ploughed by tears I have shed every day as I see myself married to this skeleton.

JUDGE. Don't weep, Madame. Lower your voice and dry your eyes and I'll see that you get justice.

MARIANA. Let me weep, for only so can I relieve my feelings. In kingdoms and well-ordered republics, the period of marriage was limited, and every three years they had to be broken up or sworn again, like matters of leases, and so that they wouldn't last a lifetime to the perpetual sorrow of both parties.

JUDGE. If this exercise of the free will could or should have been put in practice through money, it would have been done already. But be more specific, Madame, about the circumstances which impel you to ask for a divorce.

MARIANA. The winter of my husband and the springtime of my own age; the way he wakes me up and makes me get up at midnight to warm cloths and bags of bran to put on his liver, the way I put now this, now that bandage on him, (and I hope to see him bandaged to a stake by justice). The care that I must take to put soothing syrup at the head of his bed in the wee small hours of the night, in order that he may not suffocate, and the way I am obliged to endure his bad breath which one can smell farther than three harquebuse shots away —

CLERK. It must come from some decayed tooth.

OLD MAN. Impossible, because may the devil carry away any molar or tooth that I have in my whole head.

ATTORNEY. There is a law which says, as I have heard

tell, that bad breath is sufficient cause to divorce the wife from the husband or the husband from the wife.

Old Man. To tell the truth, gentlemen, the bad breath which she says I have, comes, not from my decayed teeth, for I have none, nor from my stomach which is very healthy, but from the evil intentions of her heart. Your Honor hardly knows this woman. On my word, if you did know her, you would keep away from her and make the sign of the cross. Twenty-two years have I lived, a martyr, with her, or her whims, and now for the last two years every day she has been giving me swings and pushes toward the sepulchre, and with her cries she has me half-deaf, and from her wrangling, out of my wits. If she cures me, as she says, she cures me with scoldings, while the hand and treatment of a doctor ought to be gentle. In short, gentlemen, I am the one who is dying in her power, and she is the one who is living in mine, because she is the lady with a plain and mixed dominion over the possessions which I have.

Mariana. Possessions? And what possessions do you have that you have not acquired in my dowry? And half of the wealth gained is mine, worse luck to you! And of that and of the dowry, if I should die this minute, I would not leave a penny's worth to you, so that you can see how much love I have for you.

Judge. Tell us, Sir, when you entered into relations with this woman, were you not lively, healthy, and in good physical condition?

Old Man. I have told you that twenty-two years ago I entered into relations with her as one would with the boss of galley slaves when one is compelled by necessity to row in the galleys, and I was so healthy that I could see all her bids and raise them like one who plays a card game.

Mariana. A new broom sweeps clean.

Judge. Keep quiet, and bad luck to you, good woman, and get out of here because I see no reason to divorce you. He who dances must pay the piper. No husband is obliged to stop the speed and passage of time so that it will not pass through its portals and its appointed span. And balance up the evils that he now does you with the good things he gave you when he could. And don't say another word in reply.

Old Man. If a divorce could be arranged, you would receive my gratitude. If Your Honor would do me the honor of freeing me of her, he would release me from my imprisonment, because leaving me this way when we have come to this open break, would be delivering me again to the executioner who would make me suffer. And if you can't, let us do one thing: shut her up in a convent and me in a monastery; let us divide what we have and in this way we shall be able to live in peace and in the service of God for the rest of the life that is left us.

Mariana. Confound it! I'm a fine one to be shut up. No, just go, hunt a girl who is fond of grills, tiny delivery doors, bars, and listening holes. Shut yourself up, you who can stand that since you don't have eyes to see nor ears to hear, nor feet to walk, nor hands to touch with; for I who am healthy and with my five senses complete and alive, I want to use them openly and not in a sneaking way like one who plays cards unfairly after looking at his opponents' hands.

Clerk. The woman is frank.

Attorney. And the husband is prudent, but there's no help for it.

Judge. I cannot order the divorce, *quia nullam invenio causam* (for I find no cause.)

(*Enter a soldier bedecked in finery, and his wife,* Dona Guiomar.)

Guiomar. Praise be to God who has fulfilled the desire which I had to come before Your Worship, whom I beg as earnestly as I can to be good enough to divorce me from this!

Judge. What is "this"? Hasn't he any other name? You might at least have said "the man".

Guiomar. If he were a man I wouldn't be trying to get a divorce.

Judge. What is he, then?

Guiomar. A stick of wood.

Soldier. Before God, I must be a stick of wood the way I keep silent and suffer. (Perhaps if I don't defend myself or contradict this woman, the judge will have a mind to condemn me and, thinking to punish me, will release me from captivity just as if by a miracle a captive was freed from the dungeons of Tetuan.)

Attorney. Speak more civilly, Madame, and state your business without contemptuous reproach of your husband, because His Honor, the judge of the Divorce Court who is before you, will look carefully after your appeal to justice.

Guiomar. What? Don't you want me to call a statue no more active than he, a stick of wood?

Mariana. She and I complain, no doubt, of the same offence.

Guiomar. In short, I tell you, my dear sir, that they married me to this man, since Your Honor is pleased to call him one, but this isn't the man I married.

Judge. How is that? I don't understand you.

Guiomar. I mean that I thought I married a real and true man, and in a few days I found I had married a stick of wood, as I have said; because he does not know which is his right hand nor does he look for ways or means to harvest a penny with which to help sustain his home and family. His mornings are spent hearing mass and loafing at the Guadalajara gateway [of Madrid] gossiping, learning news, telling and hearing lies; in the afternoons and even in the mornings, he goes from home to the gambling houses and there he makes one more of the lookers-on who, as I have heard, make a group of people whom gamblers hate especially. Two o'clock in the afternoon he comes to eat without their having given him a penny for luck, because it is no longer the custom to give it. He goes out again, he comes in at midnight, he eats if he finds anything, otherwise he crosses himself, yawns, and goes to bed, and he twists and turns all night without resting. I ask him what is the matter; he replies that he is composing a sonnet in his mind for a friend who has asked him for it. He persists in being a poet as if this were a craft with which worldly poverty were not closely linked.

Soldier. My wife, Doña Guiomar, in all that she has said has not gone beyond the bounds of reason and if I were not right in what I do as she is in what she says, I would have gained some favor of the ministers of justice here or there and been able to see myself, like other crafty and clamorous manikins, with a staff of office in my hands, and on a dried-up, hired mule of bad disposition, without any mule driver to accompany me because such mules are never

hired except when they are bad and with nothing to do, its saddle bags on its flanks and in one pocket a clean collar and a shirt and in the other a half cheese and bread and a flask, without adding to my street clothes anything except leggings and one lone spur to make them traveling clothes. And with a commission and even an itching in his bosom, that sort of person leaves by the Toledan Bridge bobbing along serenely in spite of the bad tricks of the lazy animal. And in a few days he sends home some sides of bacon and some pieces of unbleached linen — that is to say, those things which come cheap in the markets in the district of his supervision, and with such stuff the rascal keeps up his house as best he can. But I who have neither job nor benefice, don't know what to do because there is no master who will employ me because I am married, so I shall be forced to beg you, most worthy judge, since hidalgos are so annoying when they are poor, and since my wife wants it, that you divide and separate us.

GUIOMAR. There's more to it than that, Your Honor, because as I see that my husband is so good for nothing and he suffers need, I kill myself to make it up to him, but I can't, because when all's said and done, I'm a good woman and I must not commit crimes.

SOLDIER. That would be reason enough for this woman to be loved, but, under this cloak of honor lies hidden the vilest disposition in the world. She is jealous without cause, she wrangles without any excuse, she is presumptuous without anything to back her and since she realizes I'm poor, she does not care a snap of her fingers for me. And the worst of it is, Your Worship, that she wants me in exchange for the loyalty that she shows me, to put up with and conceal hundreds of thousands of impertinences and unpleasantnesses that she inflicts on me.

GUIOMAR. Well, why not? Why shouldn't you have to show some consideration and respect for me when I'm so good?

SOLDIER. Listen, Madame Guiomar. Here, before these gentlemen, I want to ask you this: Why do you hold your goodness over me since because you come of good family and on account of what you owe yourself, you are really compelled to be so? That's a fine idea that women want their husbands to respect them for their chastity and honor, as if

in these alone lies wholly their perfection, and those very same women fail to see the leaks through which runs to waste the power of a thousand other virtues which they lack. What difference does it make to me if you are chaste? But it makes lots of difference that you are careless in your household management and that you always go around scowling, cross, jealous, absent-minded, wasteful, sleepy, lazy, grumbling and ready for a quarrel, to say nothing of a dozen other bad qualities of this sort that are enough to bring two hundred husbands to the grave. (*Suddenly recalling the part he was trying to play.*) But, nevertheless, most worthy judge, I tell you that my wife, Madame Guiomar, has none of these bad qualities, while I confess that I am the blockhead, the useless, abandoned lazybones of the family, and so, by the code of good government, if not for anything else, Your Honor is compelled to grant us a divorce, because right now I say I have no defense to make against all that my wife has said, and I relinquish the case and shall be glad to be judged guilty.

GUIOMAR. What defense is there to be made against what I have said? That you don't provide food for me or our servant, and I vow that we don't have many servants, but one only, and she not full grown and with an appetite that a cricket would be ashamed of.

CLERK. Silence in the court, for here come new defendants.

(*Enter one dressed in medical garb, who is a surgeon, and* ALDONZA DE MINJACA, *his wife.*)

DOCTOR. For four well-justified reasons do I appear before Your Honor to beg you to grant a divorce to me and my wife, Aldonza de Minjaca, who is here present.

JUDGE. You come with your plea well in hand. Tell us the four reasons.

DOCTOR. Firstly, because she seems to me like a whole company of devils; secondly, for the reason that she knows well; thirdly, for a reason that I'm keeping to myself; and fourthly, in order that the devils may not carry me away when I depart this life, as they will if I have to stay in her company till my death.

ATTORNEY. Sufficiently have you proved your case, I must say!

ALDONZA. Your Honor the Judge, please hear me and know that if for four reasons my husband seeks a divorce, I have four hundred. The first because every time I see him, I get the impression that I see Lucifer himself. Secondly, because I was deceived when I married him, since he told me he was a real doctor who takes pulses and has suddenly blossomed into merely a barber-surgeon and one who puts on bandages and cures little ailments, and compared to a real doctor he'd be cheap at half the price. Thirdly, because he is jealous of the sun that touches me; fourthly, because in order not to see him I'd be glad to be two million leagues from him.

CLERK. Who the deuce can make two such clocks run together when the machinery is so out of gear?

ALDONZA. Fifthly —

JUDGE. Madame, Madame, if you think you are going to string out all the four hundred reasons here, I'm not ready to listen to them even if there were opportunity. Your plea will be taken under advisement and so goodbye, because we have other matters to settle.

DOCTOR. What more proofs do you need beside the fact that I don't want to die with her and she has no desire to live with me?

JUDGE. If that were enough to obtain divorces for married couples, there would be plenty who would shake from their shoulders the yoke of matrimony.

(*Enter one dressed like a burden-bearer with a bi-colored cloak to show his profession.*)

BEARER. Mr. Judge, I'm a burden-bearer and I don't deny it, but my blood is pure, and I am a good and just man, and if it were not that sometimes I take a bit of wine, or it takes me, which is nearer the truth, I would have been steward of the fraternity of brothers of burden. But leaving that aside, I want Your Honor to know that when I was very sick from Bacchus' disease, I promised to marry a loose woman. I came to myself, I got well, and I kept my promise and I married a woman whom I withdrew from her evil ways. I got her a position as market woman. She has turned out so haughty and of such evil character that she quarrels with everyone who comes to her table, now over short weight, now over those who come to steal the fruit, and

for no reason at all she hits them over the head or any other place with a weight, and she abuses them and their ancestors for generations back, without having an hour of peace with all her talkative neighbors. And all day I must have my sword flying like a sackbut player to defend her, and we don't gather in enough of those hard-earned pesos to pay the charges and fines for quarrelling. I shall like Your Honor to be kind enough to separate me from her or at least change our mad life to another more restrained and calm. And I promise you to carry free all the coal that you buy this winter, for I have a great deal of influence with the fraternity of the merchants of the back, the burden-bearers.

Doctor. I know the wife of this good man, and she is as bad as my Aldonza, and I can't say anything worse about her.

Judge. See here, ladies and gentlemen, though some of you here have shown cause for receiving a fitting decree of divorce, nevertheless, it is necessary that the evidence be given in writing and let witnesses give evidence. And so I shall take it under advisement. But, what is this? Musicians and guitars in my court? This is a strange new thing.

(*Enter two musicians.*)

A Musician. My Lord Judge, those two discordant married people whom you calmed, brought into accord, and pacified the other day, are awaiting your presence at a grand banquet at their house, and they send us to beg you to be kind enough to join with them and honor them.

Judge. That I shall be very glad to do, and may God grant that all those here before me come to agreement as they did.

Attorney. At that rate we clerks and lawyers of this court would die of hunger. No, indeed, no! I wish rather that all the world would seek divorce; because after all, most of them remain just as they were, and we have enjoyed the fruit of their quarrels and needs.

Musician. Well, sirs, indeed we must go and enliven the festivities.

(*The musicians sing.*)

When honest love has run its course
And law-suit looms not far ahead
'Tis best to compromise instead
Of rushing off to seek divorce.

When eyes aren't blind, and folks see clear,
And petty tribulations gall,
Then have your quarrels once for all
And live in peace throughout the year.

There is a place where honor's born,
Good taste's reviewed, that once was dead —
It is where concord's sought, instead
Of man-made parting — so forlorn.

Though jealousy augments its might
(O passion fierce and pitiful!) —
Because of Lady Beautiful,
It is not jealousy, — 'tis delight.

My verdict comes from valid source,
'Tis held by Cupid, imp of love,
Who puts the worst accord above
The value of the best divorce.

CURTAIN.

Gustavo Adolfo Becquer

By George H. Daugherty, Jr.

In Spain, more than anywhere else in the world, the tangible things of the high feudal age have survived: the cities, castles, cathedrals, towers, and palaces; even the very gardens laid out at the command of princesses dead these seven hundred years.[1] Soaked in this feudal environment as thoroughly as Sir Walter Scott was in that of the Scotch border, Becquer recreates not only the glamour and pageantry of the Spanish Middle Ages, but also the religious fervor and mysticism, the wild superstitions, the ferocious cruelty of the times. In his own country he has long been recognized as a romantic poet and prose writer of the very first order.

The *Tales* afford, no doubt, a sufficient portrayal of the genius and character of Gustavo Adolfo Becquer. Compared to these, the facts of his life are unimportant. Nevertheless, they are not devoid of tragic interest. The discrepancy between his actual circumstances and his dreams was appalling and grotesque. Romantic poets, generally, have not led happy lives, but Becquer's span of only thirty-four years was so desperately miserable that the reader of his biography is inclined to agree with the friend who watched him breathe his last and remarked that he did well to die.

His family — the Becquers or Beckers — was noble, originally coming from Flanders to Seville toward the end of the seventeenth century. Proof of nobility is seen in the fact that several of Becquer's ancestors were, at different times, members of the Council of Twenty-four Gentlemen in the municipal government of Seville. These posts were open only to members of the aristocracy.

By the beginning of the 19th century, however, their glory had long vanished. Gustavo Adolfo's father, Don Jose Dominguez Becquer, was a very mediocre painter, barely

[1]Already many of these priceless monuments have been blasted off the earth by one or the other of the factions in the last and bloodiest of all Spanish revolutions. Toledo, the ancient, feudal city that Becquer loved so much is largely in ruins; the Alcazar described in "The Rival Squires of Toledo" is a jumbled heap of stones; the great cathedral has been rifled and stripped of its jewels. (See "The Golden Bracelet"). The Tales of Becquer, therefore, acquire a new value, for with the destruction of the original treasures, their glory is reflected in his pages as nowhere else.

able to earn a decent living for his wife and seven boys. Shortly after the birth of the seventh son, both parents died, leaving the children to the care of an uncle.

Gustavo Adolfo, born February 17, 1836, was the second child. The only other member of the family to show talent was his older brother, Valeriano, who became a better painter than the father. He is now chiefly remembered because of the great affection between him and Gustavo and the close association of the brothers lasting all their lives which were almost equally short and unfortunate.

A neighbor, who was also the lad's godmother, relieved the uncle of care of Gustavo, and first sent him to a government school to become a sea pilot. When the school was disbanded, he studied painting in his uncle's studio. That relative was so little impressed by his nephew's talent that he remarked: "You will never be a good painter, but only a bad writer."

In fact, at the age of 17, Gustavo had read widely in his godmother's excellent library, and already dreamed of becoming a famous poet. He and two young friends as full of illusions as himself wrote poems for a volume which they believed would bring them a fortune. After some difficulty, Gustavo persuaded his uncle and godmother to let him go to Madrid to sell the poems. He arrived there in the autumn of 1854 with twelve dollars and the manuscript. Needless to say, he nearly starved to death. These early verses have, fortunately, disappeared, probably destroyed by their disillusioned author. They were, doubtless, of little value.

For some time he lived on the charity of a soft-hearted, boarding-house landlady who was also a native of Seville. Eventually, through an acquaintance who knew a person of influence, he landed a small post as a clerk in a government office. Finding his work dull, he amused himself and his office-mates by drawing sketches on official letterheads.

"Now this," said Becquer over his shoulder to the crowd behind him, "is Hamlet; and . . . "

"What is this?" asked the department chief who had suddenly come in on the startled clerks.

"This girl is Ophelia," continued Becquer without looking up at the questioner, "who is tearing up her wreath; and

this old boy is the gravedigger. And over here, we have . . . ''

"Here we have one clerk too many!" broke in the director.

Once again, Becquer went through a long period of abject poverty and actual starvation. Now and then he picked up a living as a house-painter, and again did translating (he was a student of English literature and an enthusiastic devotee of Shakespeare), hack-writing, and the like. His health broke down, and only the care of his friends kept him alive. Recovering, he worked on several ephemeral newspapers until 1860 when he joined the staff of *El Contemporaneo,* a journal of more solid pretensions.

About this time occurred his grand platonic romance. Seeing a beautiful blonde girl on a balcony, he fell violently in love without having exchanged a word, or even knowing her name. To her he wrote a number of poems, and he declared to his friends that she was his inspiration. One of the friends, it seems, actually knew her father, and offered to secure an introduction. Becquer, however, refused, on the ground that actual acquaintance might shatter his romantic ideal. Diffidence over his poverty probably had a good deal to do with his refusal. At all events, they met but once, years later, after both had married.

Becquer's dreamy genius by no means fitted him to shine as a journalist at a time of revolutionary upheavals, when the only thing that paid was political reporting. Many of his newspaper friends made their fortunes by allying themselves with political parties or factions; but not Becquer. His was the world of the Middle Ages, of imagination, and romance. Seeing him sit, silent and absorbed in his inner visions, during the noisy discussions in the cafés, the others thought that he scarcely lived in the present at all. This was not strictly just, for a number of Becquer's newspaper articles describe various out-of-the-way places, or actual scenes of vivid local color such as the famous *Feria* or Fair of Seville that caught his attention and fired his imagination. For the columns of *El Contemporaneo* he also wrote book reviews, descriptive criticisms of Valeriano's genre paintings, literary essays, architectural descriptions, and fantastic tales, all marked by imaginative vigor and a pe-

culiarly poetic style. Many of these articles have never been recovered and collected, so that today, there is no really "complete" edition of Becquer's works. The uncollected material was, in all probability, of ephemeral interest.

His real reactions to the frantic world around him are expressed in the following lines from the second of the *Letters From My Cell,* which were published when he had retired, temporarily, for his health to the deserted monastery of Santa Maria de Veruela.

"At this distance and in this place, it seems a lie that such a world as I knew even exists, the world of Congress, of editors' offices, of the casino and the theatres and that it is still just as I left it: raging and amusing itself, today with a jest, tomorrow with a funeral, everything at once, everyone reaping hopes and delusions, all running after something they will never reach, until, running, they fall into one of these silent traps which death is laying for us, and so they disappear as if through a trap-door, with a newspaper line for an epitaph.

"When these ideas assault me, I make efforts in vain to join in music which sweeps everyone along together like a whirlwind; I see nothing more in this continuous agitation, in this going and coming, than what someone sees who looks at a dance from far away: a mute and inexplicable pantomime, grotesque sometimes, terrible at others."

To eke out the microscopic pay he received for his articles, he also continued to paint. He and Valeriano worked together on frescoes in several Madrid houses. The two brothers lived together and often took artistic journeys. Once they were in that most romantic of cities, Toledo, and decided to enjoy the sight of the ancient town in moonlight. While wandering outside the walls earnestly talking about "ogives," "gothic arches," "Moorish windows," and other architectural matters, they were suddenly nabbed by a pair of Guardias Civiles[1] whose suspicions had been aroused by such incomprehensible language. The artists, characteristically, had forgotten their identity cards and papers. Gustavo insisted on his reputation as a journalist, until one of the Guards recalled having read something signed by a certain Gustavo Adolfo Becquer, but said there was a great difference between this noted writer and the seedy-looking prisoner. Becquer then offered to compose a literary description of the magnificent view of the city in front of them, so that the police could identify him by his style. The police, outraged by such a suggestion not provided for in their book of rules, thrust the brothers in jail. There they had to stay

[1]Civil Guards or State Police.

all night and the next day until they could get a message through to the paper which then respectfully begged their release from the governor.

The strain of this journalistic life told heavily on Gustavo's health. In 1861, he and Valeriano went to live in the ancient, deserted monastery at the foot of the mountain, Moncayo, near Tarragona. In this lonely and desolate spot, Becquer achieved as much happiness as he ever was to have in his life. He delighted in the romantic old building and the wild country around it, just as Washington Irving delighted in the Alhambra. Like Irving, too, Becquer made the most of his contacts with the primitive peasants he encountered in his daily rambles, and obtained from them hints for his tales.[2]

On various occasions he returned here for his health and for new inspiration. From here, in 1864, he wrote his *Cartas Desde Mi Celda,* or *Letters From My Cell,* a series of essays, sometimes weird, sometimes pathetic, but always interesting. Some of his best tales are laid in the vicinity of Moncayo.

If Becquer obtained a fleeting measure of health and happiness, and some of his finest inspiration at Veruela, he also fell into a terrible misfortune, his marriage.

His friends are unanimous in their testimony on this point. None of them could understand how Becquer, the poet and hero of a youthful platonic romance, could have married the girl he did. She was, they agreed, totally inferior to him, an empty-headed, utterly commonplace young woman, daughter of a country doctor of the neighborhood. Becquer met her and married her on his first visit to Veruela, in 1861. He was, no doubt, lonesome and in love with an ideal rather than the actual woman. She was probably in love with the idea that he would take her to Madrid. He did this, it is true, but they had to live in the utmost poverty. Worse yet from her point of view, he brought her back, when he could, to Veruela. They had three children, none of whom inherited any of their father's genius.

The effect of this marriage on Becquer has thus been

[2]See "The Miserere," "The Mountain of the Ghosts," "The Witch of Moncayo," et. al.

summed up, unchivalrously, but no doubt accurately, by one of his biographers:

"Becquer was very unfortunate in his marriage. The coarseness of a vulgar woman in conflict with the delicacy and highly refined sensibilities of the poet, the rudimentary instincts of a primitive character without understanding or tenderness . . . destroyed the illusion of an hour to create on the cold ashes a frightful conjugal hell full of irremediable tortures."

What Becquer, himself, thought is expressed in the lines written a few days before his death.

"One woman poisoned my soul,
Another poisoned my body;
Neither of the two sought me out;
Of neither of them do I complain.

As the world is round, so it rolls;
If, rolling, tomorrow this poison
Poisons in its turn, why accuse me?
Can I give more than they gave me?"

Even more bitter is the following verse:

"My life is a wasteland;
The flower that I touch drops its leaves,
For in my fated road
Someone goes ahead, sowing evil
For me to reap as I pass."

In the meantime, he continued to write his poems, some of which appeared in *El Contemporaneo,* while others remained unpublished. Some years later, in 1868, a certain politician named Gonzalez Brabo was sufficiently impressed by Becquer's genius to offer him a government post as censor of novels, and at the same time proposed to bear the expense of publishing his poems. Becquer, therefore, collected them and entrusted the manuscript to his friend. But a revolutionary disturbance occurred during which Brabo had to leave the country, while a mob broke into his house. In the commotion Becquer's manuscript was lost — a fair

sample of the misfortunes that dogged him all his life. He did not succeed in re-creating his poems until long afterward, and it is possible that many have been lost forever.

As a poet, Becquer is highly esteemed, despite the fact that his poems include only seventy-six numbered *Rimas,* or short, unrhymed lyrics, and four other poems, of much the same kind, but not numbered with the *Rimas,* and bearing the following titles: *Es Un Sueno La Vida* (Life Is a Dream), *Amor Eterno* (Eternal Love), *A Casta* (To the Chaste One), *A Todos Los Santos* (To All the Saints).

The numbered *Rimas* represent a sort of spiritual and emotional autobiography. In the first few he voices his youthful, vague, ecstatic aspirations toward poetry, his delight in nature. Some of these poems, lacking rhyme and possessing rhythm rather than meter, recall Shelley.

"I am the burning cloud
That floats in the abyss;
I am the luminous trail
Of the wandering star.

I am the snow on the peaks,
I am the fire on the sands,
I am the wave of the seas,
I am the river's foam.

I in fine, am the spirit,
Essence unknown,
Mysterious perfume,
Of which the poet is the vessel."[1]

The young poet, in love with his imaginary ideal of womanhood, at last meets the lady in the flesh and gives himself up completely to his passion. At first he is kept at a distance by her, but eventually triumphs in obtaining her affection. His ecstasy is unbounded. In the thirtieth *Rima,* however, a quarrel is hinted at; the poet is haughtily dismissed, and the lady thereafter affects not to know him even when they meet. His love, nevertheless, continues unabated; he tries in vain to regain her affection. She con-

[1]From Rima V.

tinues to ignore him, and he is driven to despair by the agony of his loss. It was one of these poems, *Rima XLVI,* which inspired the bronze figure of the cupid dying with a dagger in his back, on the Becquer monument in Seville:

"Hiding in the shadows, she has wounded me."

At last the poet becomes resigned to his loss, though grief remains in his heart, and his spirit is forever darkened. He consoles himself by thoughts of his approaching death. Thus the series closes with his somber meditations on the nature of death and his mingled fears and longings.

How much these poems are intended to convey the poet's real life and feeling is a question. It is probable that the romance he hints at is entirely fictitious, but that in this manner he chose to express his very real despair at the wretchedness of his marriage and the clash between his inner world of illusion and the hard circumstances of his real existence.

During the remaining years before his death he continued his close association with Valeriano whose paintings he frequently described in *El Contemporaneo.* At the same time, both in *El Contemporaneo* and another review called *El Museo Universal,* he published his weird tales, local-color sketches, and literary and dramatic reviews. Having lost his government appointment, he was still finding it difficult to make a living. Typical of this period is the report that he sold for two dollars *Las Hojas Secas* (The Dry Leaves), one of his finest sketches, a sort of prose poem similar in tone to Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind".

He translated Dante, and planned a work to be called *Martyrs of Genius.* He could have done it justice, but it was never to be accomplished. The death of Valeriano, in 1870, had a terrible effect on Gustavo Adolfo, and undermined his health. Like their father, Valeriano was only thirty-five when he died. As can be seen in Gustavo's preface to the *Tales,* the idea of his own death had been constantly before him for years. He now largely abandoned his work and spoke of his life as nearly over. One thing which he summoned courage to write at this time, however, was a short but touchingly affectionate sketch of Valeriano's life with an appreciation of his brother's work.

One bitter day in mid-December, 1870, Becquer caught pneumonia while riding on top of a bus. Within a few days,

his condition became critical, and on the 22nd, he died. A friend of his, present at the end, records as follows his shocked impressions at the misery of the Becquer ménage:

" . . . in the last days of his illness, I went to see my poor friend, and the interior of his house made me hope he would die quickly.

"One's mind is cheered, and one is moved to envy married life at the sight of a poor but clean hearth, where children and flowers compete in sweetness, and there is present the joy of intimate, if obscure felicity . . . But the uncared-for house, the room in disorder, the poet's wife lacking the intelligence to speak of anything, the sick man alone and given over to mute desperation . . . Oh, what a sad end, what a horrible martyrdom for one who was born with the wings of an eagle, and now must die like the least of the common herd.

" . . . 'He does well to die,' I said to a friend, 'because his kingdom is not of this earth.' "

Even after his death, the sad fatality that hung over him while living continued for a long time to shadow his memory. Some few of his lines might possibly be construed to express an uncertainty as to the future existence of the soul. For this reason, perhaps, or some other, equally trivial, the bigoted authorities of the cathedral refused to allow his portrait, donated by an admirer, to be hung with those of other great men of Seville in the famous Columbian library. Similarly, for years, the authorities of the University of Seville refused permission to have his remains interred in the university church.

Becquer's friends and admirers, while at first but few, were very active in his behalf, beginning at once after his death. Their zeal was such, indeed, that one can only regret they did not exert it to make conditions more tolerable for him while he was living. At all events, the first meeting of men interested in seeing an edition of his works published was held only two days after he died. The result was a subscription, part of which was also used to relieve the family.

Slowly, the poet's reputation began to grow. From first to last, his most ardent partisans have been literary men. It may be that Becquer's poetry appeals more to other poets than to the general reading public. Among the growing

number of distinguished people who have taken an interest in spreading Becquer's fame are the famous dramatists, Joaquin and Serafin Quintero. These gentlemen composed a play, *La Rima Eterna,* the proceeds of which went to pay for the beautiful and impressive monument to Becquer which was unveiled in Maria Luisa Park, Seville, in December, 1911. Two years later, his remains and those of his brother were finally transferred, with imposing public ceremonies, to the chapel of the University of Seville, and there interred under a fine sculptured memorial.

The interest of the common folk of Spain in Becquer is seen in the fact that a group of stone masons contributed to put a marble plaque on the building near Seville, which the author described in his story, "The Inn of the Cats."

The work of Becquer can be classified as follows: *Tales,* or "Legends" as he himself called them; the poems, or *Rimas;* the "Letters From My Cell", a series of descriptive essays, with narratives interspersed ("The Witch of Moncayo" is an extract from one of these); miscellaneous essays, including his famous "Literary Letters to a Woman"; local-color sketches; art and architectural criticisms; literary and informal essays. In the *Collected Works,* several more or less autobiographical stories such as "The Inn of the Cats", are included among the essays. Becquer also wrote a short but violent melodrama of intrigue in Venice,[1] his only effort in the field of the drama. It is not known that it was ever acted.

Becquer's own "Invocation" and the tales are evidence enough of his personality and the nature of his art. Americans reading them will at once recall our own great romancers, Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. A detailed comparison with either of these mature geniuses would be unfair. Becquer's work is definitely pitched in a minor key. He has neither the clarity, humor, or skill of Irving in depicting character, nor the brilliance, the logic, and flawless technique of Poe. Occasionally Becquer's technique is faulty, his style obscure. Over Irving, however, he has this advantage in dealing with Spanish legends: Irving, for all his sympathy, was a foreigner in Spain. His

[1]Entitled **Un Drama . . . El Mayor Monstruo, los Celos.** (A Drama . . . The Worst Monster, Jealousy).

matchless sense of humor caused him to write very frequently with his tongue in his cheek. Becquer, however, was a child of the land, born and brought up in the environment which he describes. He carried its traditions in his blood and the fibers of his brain. Seville — one of the most romantic of Spanish cities — was his native town. Therefore, his descriptions of ancient Spain have the more authentic ring, for example, the scenes in "The Rival Squires of Toledo." In such tales as "The Golden Bracelet", "Master Perez" and "The Miserere", he powerfully expresses the peculiar fervor of the religious faith embodied in the great Spanish churches and the inspiration of so much of Gothic art. Of course, he did not invent the fables that he tells. All of them were old before the Arabian Nights were composed. In the scenes and the atmosphere, however, he is most original and at the same time, most truly Spanish. In some of the "Letters From My Cell", he attempts to re-tell Moorish legends, but fails in dealing with this material out of which Irving made his greatest success.

Becquer's ability to create weird atmosphere and to depict tragedy and horror may be compared to Poe's. Here again there is a difference. Poe's world of romantic terror is almost entirely an unreal one which only the great power of his genius renders credible. Becquer's settings are real enough. He actually lived in them. As for the imaginary events, they, too, had a real foundation in this sense: the people of mediæval Spain did believe in such things, have even recorded on oath that they saw them occur. In this respect, such tales as "The Devil's Cross" and "The Mountain of the Ghosts" are realistic where Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher", for example, is pure fantasy.

Broadly speaking, all Spanish art and literature have a realistic base. Becquer, as previously noted, had a keen eye to observe real life whenever it struck him as colorful, picturesque, and dramatic. In such sketches as "The Witch of Moncayo" (extracted from the sixth of his "Letters From My Cell") he has made a powerful but bleakly realistic etching of a somber tragedy of village ignorance and cruelty. Less melodramatic but no less realistic a study of humble Spanish life is "The Inn of the Cats". In most of his work the author avoids the sins of mere sensationalism and

sentimentalism into which romantic writers so easily degenerate.

Not all of Becquer's tales are of enduring quality. Some few reflect so vividly the violent religious and racial prejudices of mediæval Spain as to nullify their entertainment value. So long, however, as the Middle Ages themselves remain the period of High Romance, so long as the pageant of armored knights, richly robed ladies leaning out of gothic windows, battlemented towers half-seen through snow swirling on mountain heights, ghosts, dungeons, and tournaments continue to entertain, Becquer will be read.

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The Creation

A FANTASY OF INDIA

By Gustavo Adolfo Becquer
Translated from the Spanish
By George H. Daugherty, Jr.

I.

The airy peaks of the Himalayas are crowned by dark mists in whose depths the lightning flickers; and over the plains extending at their feet float opalescent clouds which sprinkle the flowers with pearly dew.

On the pure waves of the Ganges rocks the symbolic lotus flower; and on the bank the crocodile, green as the leaves of the aquatic plants which hide it from the traveller, awaits its victim.

In the groves of Hindustan there are gigantic trees whose branches offer a pavilion to the weary pilgrim; and there are others whose lethal shade lulls him from sleep unto death.

Love is a chaos of light and darkness; woman an amalgam of perjury and tenderness; man, an abyss of grandeur and meanness; life, in short, may be compared to a long chain with links of iron and gold.

II.

The world is an absurd animated thing which spins in the void to the astonishment of its inhabitants.

You need not seek its explanation in the *Vedas,* those testimonials of the madness of our ancestors, or in the *Puranas* where, dressed in the dazzling garb of poetry, nonsense is heaped on nonsense about its origin.

Listen to the history of the Creation as it was revealed to a pious Brahmin after he had passed three months fasting, immovable in the contemplation of himself, and with his hands raised toward the firmament.

III.

Brahma is the center of the circle; from him all things radiate, and toward him all things converge. He had no beginning, he will have no end.

When neither space nor time existed, Maya was floating about him like a confused cloud. Brahma, absorbed in the contemplation of himself, had not yet fertilized her with his desires.

As everything grows weary, Brahma grew weary of contemplating himself. Raising the eyes of one of his four faces, he encountered himself, and annoyed, he opened another pair of eyes and turned to see himself, because he was everywhere, and everything was he.

A beautiful woman when she burnishes the steel mirror and contemplates her reflection, delights in herself. At last, however, she seeks other eyes on which to fix her own, and if she encounters them not, she becomes vexed.

Brahma is not vain like woman, because he is perfect. Imagine for yourself whether you would not grow bored to find yourself alone, utterly alone in the midst of eternity and with four pairs of eyes to see yourself.

IV.

Brahma desired for the first time, and his desire fertilized Maya, the creatrix who surrounded him, and caused millions of points of light to burst forth from her womb. They were similar to those microscopic and flaming atoms swimming in the ray of sunlight shining between the tops of the thick trees.

That golden dust filled the void, and, as it swirled, produced myriads of beings predestined to chant hymns of glory to their creator.

These *gandharvas,* or celestial singers, with their beautiful faces, their wings of a thousand colors, their sonorous laughter, and their childish tricks drew from Brahma the first smile; and from that smile blossomed Paradise: Paradise with its eight circles, the tortoises, and the elephants which they support, and its sanctuary at the summit.

V.

Youngsters have always been youngsters: noisy, turbulent, and incorrigible, they begin by being amusing; an hour later they are annoying, and in the end, disgusting. Something of the kind must have happened to Brahma; for alighting from the gigantic swan, which like a snowy charger carried him through the heavens, he left that riotous throng

of *gandharvas* in the lower circles and retired to the depths of his sanctuary.

There, not a stray echo comes, nor is heard the slightest whisper; the august silence of solitude reigns, and its profound calm is conducive to meditation. Brahma, seeking a distraction with which to kill his eternal boredom, locked the door with two turns of the key, and devoted himself to alchemy.

VI.

The wise men of earth, who pass their lives hunched over ancient parchments, who surround themselves with a thousand mysterious objects, and know the strange properties of precious stones, of metals, and cabalistic words, these men by means of this science, often make incredible transformations. They convert carbon into diamonds, clay into gold; they decompose water and air; they analyze the flame and drag from the fire its secret of vitality and light.

If a wretched mortal achieves all this by the concentration of his reasoning power, think for an instant what Brahma could do, who is the beginning of all science.

VII.

At one stroke he created the four elements, and at the same time, their guardians: *Agni,* who is the spirit of the flame; *Vayu,* who howls, mounted on the hurricane; *Varuna,* who revolves in the abysses of the ocean; and *Pithivi,* who knows all the subterranean caverns of all the worlds, and who lives in the womb of creation.

Afterwards, in transparent flasks of a material never before seen, he sealed the germs of all immaterial and intangible things: passions, desires, faculties, virtues, the principles of pain and pleasure, of death and life, of good and evil. And all these he subdivided into species, and classified them with exquisite diligence, placing an inscribed label on each one of the flasks.

VIII.

The throng of young scamps who were so completely deafening the lower circles of Paradise with their voices and their uproarious games soon noticed the absence of their Lord.

"Where can he be?" exclaimed some. "What is he

doing?'' others asked among themselves; and their eager curiosity was by no means diminished by the columns of black smoke which they saw pouring in immense spirals from the laboratory of Brahma, or by the globes of fire which from the same place shot whirling into space, and there revolved in luminous and magnificent rounds.

IX.

The imagination of boys is a steed, and curiosity the spur that pricks it on and forces it to hurdle the most impossible undertakings. Moved by it, the microscopic choir-boys began to climb up the legs of the elephants which sustain the circles of the sky; and one after another they pulled themselves up as far as the mysterious retreat where Brahma still remained absorbed in his scientific speculations.

Once at the top, the boldest grouped themselves about the door; and some peeped through the keyhole, and others through the cracks and crevices of the poorly joined clapboards, into the immense laboratory, object of their curiosity.

The spectacle before their eyes was astounding.

X.

There lay scattered without order or arrangement, colossal vessels and flasks of all shapes and colors. Skeletons of worlds, embryos of stars, and fragments of moons lay mixed with half-modeled men, incomplete models of animals, obscure parchments, folio volumes, and strange instruments.[1] The walls were covered with geometrical figures, cabalistic signs, and magical formulae. In the middle of the room, in a gigantic cauldron placed over an inextinguishable flame, thousands and thousands of nameless ingredients were boiling with a dull rumble; and from the sage combination of these elements, perfected creations were to result.

XI.

The eight arms and sixteen hands of Brahma were scarcely enough, so busy was he in uncorking and re-sealing vessels, shaking liquids, and stirring mixtures. Now and again he took a tube, and exactly as children use dry wheat-stalks to blow soap bubbles, he submerged it in the liquid,

[1]No doubt Brahma, who classified everything with the greatest accuracy in the beginning, grew careless as his experiments proceeded. — G. H. D.

then bending over the abysses of the sky blew in one end, causing a white-hot globe to issue from the other; this, on being launched began to spin on its axis, and to rotate about the others which were already floating in space.

XII.

Leaning over the bottomless chasm, the Creator followed them with satisfied gaze, for those luminous and perfect worlds peopled by beings, happy and beautiful beyond all imagining, are those stars like suns which we can see on clear nights; and they are intoning a hymn of joy to their God as with solemn and majestic cadence they spin on their axes of diamond and gold.

The little *gandharvas*, amazed and fearful, not daring even to breathe, watched that magnificent spectacle.

XIII.

Brahma grew weary of making experiments; and so, leaving the laboratory, but not without having turned the key and putting it in his pocket as he went out, he mounted his swan once more for the purpose of taking the air. But, how great must have been his preoccupation, that he who sees all and knows all did not notice that, abstracted in his ideas, he had not actually closed the lock! Nor at the same time did he pay attention to the restless mob of rascals. These, noting his preoccupation, followed him with their eyes for a long distance, and when they thought they were alone, one of them pushed little by little on the door. Another stuck in his head, and another tiptoed in, until at last they all invaded the laboratory, and in very short order made themselves completely at home.

XIV.

To paint the scene which then occurred would be impossible.

First they examined all the objects with the greatest astonishment, then they dared to touch them, and they finished by breaking into everything. They threw parchments into the fire, and burned them up; they unsealed the retorts, not without breaking some of them; they shook the flasks and spilled their contents. After smelling, tasting, and upsetting everything, some of them grabbed hold of the suns and stars as yet unfinished and hung up in the vaults to

dry; others climbed up the framework of gigantic animals whose forms had not pleased the Master; they tore pages out of the books to make themselves paper caps; they placed the compasses between their legs in order to play horse; they broke the rods of mysterious powers, and used them for spears.

At last, tired of destruction, they decided to make a world just as they had seen one made.

XV.

Then began tremendous uproar, confusion, and whooping. The cauldron was incandescent. One of them came, spilled a liquid into it, and raised a column of smoke. Then came another, and threw in a mysterious elixir. The flask that contained it was so big, and the imp was so tiny, that he was completely out of breath when he had dragged it to the edge of the cauldron. At each new ingredient that they dumped into the pot, red and blue flames blazed in its depths, and the joyous crowd of imps greeted them with shouts of delight and interminable howls of laughter.

XVI.

There they mixed and confounded all the elements of good and evil, of sorrow and joy; ugliness and beauty; self-denial and egotism; the vital principles of frost destined for worlds made in such a manner that cold should give delightful enjoyment to the inhabitants; and the principle of heat evolved for spheres whose creatures enjoyed existence among flames. They mixed up the germs of divinity, the spiritual essence, with coarse material, fine potters' clay with mud, confounding in the same broth impotence and desire, grandeur and meanness, life and death.

As all these elements so opposed to each other came together in the depths of the cauldron, they boiled furiously.

XVII.

The experiment concluded, one of the imps snatched a quill from his wings, bit off the feather and plunging the stem in the liquid, bent over the bottomless abyss, and blew; and lo, a world appeared. A world deformed, rickety, dark, flattened at the poles, spinning crookedly at an angle, and bearing mountains of snow, and burning sands; a world with fire in its entrails and oceans on its surface, and peopled

by a humanity fragile and overbearing, with aspirations toward divinity and weakness of clay; with the principle of death destroying whatever exists, and the principle of life with aspirations toward immortality ever rebuilding out of the wreckage; an absurd world, irrational, inconceivable; in short, *our* world.

The imps who had made it, on seeing it spin in space in such a grotesque manner, saluted it with a terrific shout of laughter that resounded throughout the eight circles of Paradise.

XVIII.

Brahma, on hearing that laugh, came to himself, saw what was happening and understood everything. Indignation flamed in his eyes. His furious voice stunned the heavens and doomed the mob of young rascals who fled before him, surprised and scattered by their Master's kicks. He had just raised his hand over that deformed creation to destroy it, and the mere gesture had produced on it that terrible catastrophe we still recall as the flood, when one of the *gandharvas* — the most turbulent, but the prettiest of all, fell on his knees, saying between his sobs, "Master, Master, do not break our plaything!"

XIX.

Brahma is grave, because he is God; but, nevertheless, on hearing these words he had to make a great effort not to allow the laughter which flickered in his eyes to escape. At last, recovering himself, he exclaimed, "Go, heartless and incorrigible mob! Get out of here, so that I may no longer see you with your deformed creature. This world ought not to — cannot exist, because in it even the very atoms fight each other. But clear out. I grant it. My hope is that in your power it won't last long."

Thus spake Brahma, and the gang of youngsters, pushing each other and yelling cat-calls, started to chase our globe. This one knocked it here, and another batted it there; then they all ran around the heavens with it to the amazement of the other worlds and the desperation of their inhabitants.

Brahma has pronounced our fate, and so it must be. There is nothing more delicate, and nothing more terrible than the hands of the imps. *In them, the plaything cannot last long.*

The Broken Jug

A COMEDY

By Heinrich von Kleist

Translated from the German

By John T. Krumpelmann

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Walter, *district judge*
Adam, *village judge*
Light, *clerk of court*
Mrs. Martha Rull
Eve, *her daughter*
Veit Dimpel, *a peasant*
Ruprecht, *his son*
Mrs. Bridget

A servant, bailiffs, maids, etc.

The action takes place in a village in the Netherlands, near Utrecht.

Scene: The Courtroom.

FIRST SCENE

Adam *is sitting and bandaging his leg.*

Light *enters.*

Light. Oh, what the deuce! Come tell me, brother Adam!
What has befallen you? How you do look!

Adam. Yes, look. To stumble one needs naught but feet.
On this smooth floor here is there any stump?
Yet I have stumbled here; for each one bears
A cursed stumbling-block within himself.

Light. No, tell me friend! Each one bears a block — ?

Adam. Yes, in himself!

Light. Oh, cursed be that!

Adam. What then?

Light. Your family-tree sprouts from a fallen forbear,
Who at the very start of all things fell,
And through his fall has made himself quite famous.

But you have not — ?
ADAM. Well?
LIGHT. Likewise — ?
ADAM. If I — ? I think — ?
I fell down here. That's what I'm telling you.
LIGHT. Not actually crashed down?
ADAM. Yes, actually.
It must have been an ugly act to see.
LIGHT. And when did this misfortune come to pass?
ADAM. Just at this moment, as from out of bed
I climbed. My morning song was still upon
My lips, when into morning I did trip,
And ere I could begin the day's swift course
Our Lord above caused me to sprain my foot.
LIGHT. And then the left one too to boot?
ADAM. The left one?
LIGHT. This staid one here?
ADAM. Of course!
LIGHT. All, righteous Lord!
The one which earlier found the road of sin hard going?
ADAM. That foot! What? Hard? Why, why?
LIGHT. The clubfoot?
ADAM. Clubfoot!
Each foot, like every other, is a clump.
LIGHT. Oh please! Therein you do your right foot wrong.
The right foot cannot boast of this — great weight
And sooner dares to tread upon thin ice.
ADAM. Go on!
Where this one dares to go the other follows.
LIGHT. And what has put your face so out of joint?
ADAM. What? My face?
LIGHT. What? You know nothing of it?
ADAM. I'm a liar, if I do. How does it look?
LIGHT. How does it look?
ADAM. Yes, dear old pal.
LIGHT. Most dreadful!
ADAM. Explain yourself more clearly.
LIGHT. The skin's all off.
A loathsome sight. A piece of cheek is missing.
How big? I'd need a scale to learn its weight.
ADAM. The devil then!

LIGHT (*brings a mirror*). Here. Now convince yourself!
A sheep, that, set upon by dogs, breaks through
A hedge of thorns, leaves no more wool ahanging
Than you have lost in skin, the Lord knows where.
ADAM. Hm! Yes! 'Tis true. It's not a lovely sight.
My nose has suffered also.
LIGHT. And your eye.
ADAM. But not my eye, old fellow.
LIGHT. Oh, here lies
Right 'cross it a bloody blow, so help me God,
As if a peasant foreman had struck in rage.
ADAM. That is the bone around my eye. — Just look.
And yet I hadn't even felt all that.
LIGHT. Yes, yes! It goes thus in the heat of battle.
ADAM. Of battle! What? With that accursed goat's head
On the stove I fought, if you will. Now I remember.
When I had lost my balance, and like one drunk,
I grasped in vacant space around, about me,
I caught my trousers, which the night before
I'd hung all wet there on the stove - encasement.
You understand. I grab them and I hope
To brace my foolish self on them, and now
The belt - band breaks, and band and pants and I
Crash headlong and I smash my forehead straight
Against the stove, just where the billy - goat
Sticks forth his head to ornament the corner.
LIGHT (*laughs*). Fine, fine!
ADAM. Be damned!
LIGHT. You've fallen as Adam did,
But now's the first time it's been from out a bed.
ADAM. My Soul! But what I wished to say: "What's news?"
LIGHT. Yes, what's the news! The devil take it all!
I'd mighty near forgot it.
ADAM. Well?
LIGHT. Make ready now for a quite unexpected
Visit from Utrecht.
ADAM. What?
LIGHT. The district judge is coming.
ADAM. Who's coming?
LIGHT. Walter, the district judge, he comes from Utrecht.

He's making a tour of inspection of the courts.
This very day he comes to us.

ADAM. This day! Have you gone mad?

LIGHT. As sure as I live.
He was in Holla, the border village, yesterday.
The court of justice there he has inspected.
A peasant saw a team of fresh, fine horses
Hitched to the coach to make the trip to Huisum.

ADAM. This very day the district judge from Utrecht!
The honest man, who knows how to fleece his lambs,
Hates all such monkey-shines at the inspection.
To come to Huisum and to bother us!

LIGHT. If he came to Holla, he'll come to Huisum too.
Be careful then!

ADAM. Go on!

LIGHT. I'm telling you!

ADAM. Away with fairy-tales I've told you once.

LIGHT. The peasant himself has seen him, damn it all!

ADAM. Who knows whom the bleary-eyed old scamp has seen?
Those rascals cannot tell a human face
From the back of a head, if only the latter's bald.
Just set a hat three-cornered atop my cane,
And hang a cloak around it, two boots beneath,
Then such a louse will take it for whom you will.

LIGHT. All right, go on and doubt, in the devil's name,
Until he enters at your door!

ADAM. He enter! —
Without one single word sent in advance.

LIGHT. Such ignorance! As if the former inspector,
The Counsellor Wacholder, were still in office!
It's Counsellor Walter who holds the inspection now.

ADAM. What if it's Counsellor Walter. Leave me in peace!
Of course the man has sworn his oath of office,
And practices, as we, according to
The edicts and the customs now prevailing.

LIGHT. Well, I assure you, District Justice Walter
Appeared in Holla yesterday, unexpected,
Examined the accounts and records there
And then suspended the justice and his clerk.
For what? I know not, *ab officio*.

ADAM. The devil! What? Did the peasant tell you that?
LIGHT. That and still more —
ADAM. So?
LIGHT. If you care to know it,
This morning early, when they sought the judge,
Who had been ordered not to leave his quarters,
'Twas 'way back in the barn they finally found him.
Close to the roof he dangled from a rafter.
ADAM. What's that you say?
LIGHT. The meanwhile help arrives.
They cut him down, rub him, sprinkle him,
Yet they can barely bring him back to life.
ADAM. What? Do they bring him?
LIGHT. And now his house is sealed,
An inventory sworn, his doors are locked.
It is as if he were a corpse already.
His very rank as judge has been inherited.
ADAM. Oh hell! You see! A careless cur he was —
But yet an honest dog, as sure as I live,
A guy with whom a fellow liked to be.
But fearfully dissolute, I must say that.
If the inspector was this day in Holla,
Then I'll believe the poor old duck fared ill.
LIGHT. 'Twas this affair alone, the peasant said,
That kept the inspector from being here already.
By noon, he said, he'd be here without fail.
ADAM. By midday! Good! Old boy! Now show your friendship!
You know, of course, one hand can wash the other.
I know you yearn to be a village judge.
And you deserve it, by heavens, as well as any.
Today is not your opportunity.
Just let this chalice pass us by today.
LIGHT. Town justice, I! What do you take me for?
ADAM. You are a friend of well-composed oration.
Your Cicero you've studied just as well
As any one in school in Amsterdam.
Suppress ambition just today; you hear?
Still other occasions will surely present themselves
Where you will have a chance to show your skill.
LIGHT. We two old cronies! Away with such bad thoughts!

ADAM. In his good time the great Demosthenes
Kept silent. Just take him now as your example.
And though I'm not the King of Macedon,
I can be grateful in my little way.
LIGHT. Away with your suspicion, I have said.
Have ever I — ?
ADAM. See, I, I, for my part,
Also follow the great Greek as my model.
Concerning public monies and interest yields
A great oration might at length be wrought:
But who should care to coin such sentences?
LIGHT. Well then!
ADAM. From such reproach I am quite free,
The devil take it! And at the bottom of it all
Is nothing but a prank which, born at night,
Now shuns the daylight's prying ray.
LIGHT. I know.
ADAM. My soul! There is no reason why a judge,
When he's not sitting in the Chair of Justice,
Should be as solemn as a polar bear.
LIGHT. I'll say so too.
ADAM. Well then, come here, old pal.
Just follow me into the record-room.
The heaps of documents I'll set in order.
They lie there like the very tower of Babel.

SECOND SCENE.

A serving-man enters. The former characters. Afterwards, two maids.

SERVING-MAN. God bless you, judge! The District Justice Walter
Sends you his greetings. He'll be here anon.
ADAM. Oh, most gracious Heavens! Is he already
Finished in Holla?
SERVING-MAN. Yes, he's in Huisum now.
ADAM. Hey! Liza! Maggie!
LIGHT. Quiet, quiet now!
ADAM. My dear old fellow!
LIGHT. Send back your thanks to him.
SERVING-MAN. Tomorrow he departs for Husahe.

ADAM. What shall I do? What shall I do?
(*He reaches for his clothes.*)
FIRST MAID-SERVANT (*enters*). Sir, I'm here.
LIGHT. Will you put on your pants? Have you gone mad?
SECOND MAID-SERVANT (*enters*). I'm here, Sir Village Judge.
LIGHT. Now take your coat.
ADAM (*looks around*). Who? The District Judge?
LIGHT. Oh, it's but the maid.
ADAM. My bands! My coat! My collar!
FIRST MAID-SERVANT. But first your vest.
ADAM. What? Coat off! Quick.
LIGHT (*to the Serving-man*). Our District Judge will be
Indeed quite welcome here. We are prepared
To greet him instantly. Go, tell him that.
ADAM. The devil, then! The Justice, Adam, begs
To be excused.
LIGHT. To be excused!
ADAM. Excused.
Is he perhaps already on the way?
SERVING-MAN. He's in the tavern still. He has called the smith.
Our coach has broken asunder.
ADAM. Fine. My respects.
The smith is slow. I beg to be excused.
Say I have almost broken my neck and legs.
Just see yourself. I'm a spectacle to behold.
And every fright effects a natural purge.
Say I am sick.
LIGHT. What? Have you lost your mind?
The District Judge should be quite welcome here.
You wish — ?
ADAM. The devil!
LIGHT. What?
ADAM. I hope the devil takes me,
If it's not the same as if I'd taken a physic!
LIGHT. But still you need not light the way for him.
ADAM. Hey! Marguerite, you bag-of-bones! Oh, Liza!
THE TWO MAID-SERVANTS. We're here. What is your wish?
ADAM. Away! I say.
Go take the cream-cheese, butter, ham and sausages
And bottles out of the record-room! And quick!

Not you. The other girl. — You gaping ape, you.
Good Heavens, Marguerite! The cow-maid, Liza, shall go
Into the record-room! (*The first maid goes out.*)

SECOND MAID. Speak, if one's to understand you!

ADAM. Shut up, I say! Be gone! And fetch my wig!
Quick! Out of the bookcase! Hurry! Get along!
(*The second maid goes out.*)

LIGHT (*to the* SERVING-MAN). The District Judge, I hope, has not encountered
Aught of ill luck upon his journey here?

SERVING-MAN. Our carriage was turned over in a hollow.

ADAM. Plague! My skinned foot! I cannot get my shoes—

LIGHT. Oh my! Great Heavens! Overturned, you say?
But no further damage?

SERVING-MAN. None of importance.
My master sprained his hand; but just a little.
The coach-shaft broke.

ADAM. I wish he'd broken his neck!

LIGHT. He sprained his hand! Good Lord! And did the smith come?

SERVING-MAN. Yes, for the shaft-pole.

LIGHT. What?

ADAM. You mean the doctor.

LIGHT. What?

SERVING-MAN. For the shaft-pole?

ADAM. Oh no! For the hand.

SERVING-MAN. Adieu, dear Sirs.—I think the blokes are mad.
(*Exit.*)

LIGHT. I mean the smith.

ADAM. You betray yourself, old fellow.

LIGHT. How so?

ADAM. You are perplexed.

LIGHT. What?
(*The first maid enters.*)

ADAM. Hey, Liza!
What have you there?

FIRST MAID. It's Brunswick sausage, Judge.

ADAM. Those are the guardians' records.

LIGHT. I, perplexed!

ADAM. They go back to the record-room.

FIRST MAID. The sausages?

ADAM. No! The papers they are wrapped in.
LIGHT. That was a misunderstanding.
THE SECOND MAID (*enters*). In your book case,
Sir Judge, I can not find your periwig.
ADAM. Why not?
SECOND MAID. Hm! 'cause you — —
ADAM. Well?
SECOND MAID. Yesterday evening —
At 'leven —
ADAM. Well? Shall I hear it?
SECOND MAID. Oh you, you came
Back home, just think it over, without your wig.
ADAM. I, without my periwig?
SECOND MAID. Indeed.
There stands Eliza who can bear me witness.
And your other one is at the periwig-maker's.
ADAM. Could I — ?
FIRST MAID. Yes, 'pon my word, Sir Justice Adam!
You were baldheaded when you came back home;
You said that you had fallen; don't you know?
I had to wash the blood from off your head.
ADAM. The shameless hag!
FIRST MAID. Upon my word of honor.
ADAM. Shut up, I say. Not a single word is true.
LIGHT. Have you this wound since yesterday?
ADAM. No. Today.
The wound today and yesterday the wig.
I wore it powdered white upon my head,
And took it off, I swear it, with my hat,
Quite by mistake, just as I came indoors.
What she has washed, that really I don't know.
Get to the devil out of here, where you belong!
Into the record-room!
(FIRST MAID *exit.*)
Go, Marguerite!
Our friend, the sacristan, must lend me his.
Tell him the cat, the dirty pig, has had
Her litter in mine this very day. And it
Now lies befouled beneath my bed. Now I know!
LIGHT. What? The cat? Are you — ?
ADAM. As true as I live.

Five kittens, yellow and black, and one is white.
The black ones I will drown down in the Vecht.
What shall I do? Do you want one of them?

LIGHT. And in your wig?

ADAM. May the devil strike me dead!
My periwig I'd hung quite carefully
Upon a chair, when I was going to bed.
In the night I touch the chair, the wig falls down —

LIGHT. The cat then takes it in her mouth —

ADAM. My soul —

LIGHT. And drags it under the bed and litters in it.

ADAM. In her mouth? No. —

LIGHT. No? How else?

ADAM. The cat? Oh, what?

LIGHT. No? Or you perhaps?

ADAM. In the mouth? I b'lieve — !
I kicked it under with my foot in the morning.
When I saw it.

LIGHT. Good, good.

ADAM. What beasts they are!
They mate and have their young where'er they please.

SECOND MAID (*giggling*). Shall I be going?

ADAM. Yes, and bring my greetings
To Auntie Dressinblack, the sexton's wife.
Tell her I shall return the wig intact
This very day — To him you need say nothing.
You understand me?

SECOND MAID. I'll do just as you say. (*Exit.*)

THIRD SCENE.

ADAM *and* LIGHT.

ADAM. This day, I fear, forebodes us evil, partner.

LIGHT. Pray why?

ADAM. For everything is going topsy-turvy,
And isn't this a court-day, too?

LIGHT. Of course.
The plaintiffs are now standing at the door.

ADAM. I dreamt a plaintiff had laid hold of me
And dragged me here before the seat of justice,

And yet, 'twas I who sat upon the bench
And scolded, sauced, browbeat my very self,
And finally put the shackles around my neck.

LIGHT. What? You, yourself?

ADAM. Upon my word of honor.
The two "me's" then became but one and fled,
And had to spend the night out in the pines.

LIGHT. Well? And the dream, you think — ?

ADAM. The devil take it.
E'en though it's not the dream, some damned old trick,
Be it what it may, is now at work against me!

LIGHT. A foolish fear! Mete out as is prescribed,
The while the district judge is present here,
Plain justice to all parties 'fore the bar,
In order that the dream of the judge disgraced
Be not fulfilled in yet another way.

FOURTH SCENE.

The DISTRICT JUDGE WALTER *enters.*
The preceding characters.

WALTER. God greet you, Justice Adam.

ADAM. Oh, be welcome!
Be welcome, gracious Sir, to our fair Huisum!
Who could, oh gracious Heavens, who ever could,
Imagine for himself a pleasanter visit.
I'd ne'er have dreamed that, ere 'twas eight o'clock,
This morning could have brought me such good fortune.

WALTER. I come a little hastily, I know,
And on this journey in our country's service
I must be satisfied if all my hosts
Dismiss me with a friendly "fare - thee - well".
The meanwhile, I, as far as greetings go,
In coming bring you greetings from my heart.
The High Tribunal in Utrecht would improve
The legal practice in the rural districts,
Which seems to be at fault in many ways.
Malpractice can expect stern reprimand.
But my concern upon this trip is not
A stern affair. I'll merely see, not punish.

If I don't find all things as they should be,
I will rejoice if they're but tolerable.

ADAM. In truth such noble thoughts deserve one's praise.
Your Grace will, here and there, I have no doubt,
Find fault with my most antiquated practice,
E'en though it has held sway in Netherlands
Since Emperor Charles the Fifth's most glorious reign.
But what new-fangled ideas people find?
The world, a proverb says, grows ever wiser.
I know the whole world's reading Puffendorf,
Yet Huisum's but a small part of the world,
To which not more or less than its small part
Of the common fund of wisdom can penetrate.
Bring kindly light to justice here in Huisum
And be assured, O gracious Sir, that you
Will scarce have turned your back on us to leave
Ere justice here will give you satisfaction.
But should you find my office e'en today
Good as you wish it, my Soul, it were a wonder,
For I am in the dark to know your will.

WALTER. Quite right! There's need of regulations. Or rather,
There are too many. We'll have to sift them out.

ADAM. Yes, through a mighty sieve. Much chaff! Much chaff!

WALTER. Is that your secretary?

LIGHT. Secretary Light
At your high service, Sir. At Pentecost
Nine years I've filled this high judicial post.

ADAM (*brings a chair.*) Sit down.

WALTER. Don't bother.

ADAM. You come from Holla, then.

WALTER. Just two short miles — But how do you know that?

ADAM. How I? Your Grace's servant —

LIGHT. A peasant said so,
Who just arrived here, coming straight from Holla.

WALTER. A peasant?

ADAM. Please your Honor!

WALTER. Yes, a quite
Unpleasant incident befell us there,
Which much perturbed the cheerful mood

Which should accompany us when on such business —
I guess you should have been told of it already?

ADAM. Is't true, most gracious Sir, that Justice Paul,
Because he was confined within his house,
The fool, was seized upon by stark despair
And hung himself?

WALTER. And made the evil worse.
What first seemed lack of order, mere confusion,
Assumes since then the guise of defalcation,
Which thing, you know, the law cannot excuse.
How many funds have you?

ADAM. Five, if you please.

WALTER. What? Five? 'Twas my belief — Five active funds?
'Twas my belief you had but four —

ADAM. Beg pardon!
With the Funds Collected for the Rhenish Floods?

WALTER. With the Funds Collected for the Overflow!
But now the Rhine is not at overflow,
And those collections do not now take place.
But tell me, don't you hold your Court today?

ADAM. If we —

WALTER. What?

LIGHT. Yes, the first day of the week.

WALTER. And that great crowd of people that I saw
Out in your hallway there, are they — ?

ADAM. They will —

LIGHT. They are the plaintiffs already thus assembled.

WALTER. This situation suits me fine, my friends.
Just let the people enter, if you please.
I'll witness here your method of procedure
And what the custom is with you in Huisum.
The registry and funds we'll check up later,
After the trial itself has been disposed of.

ADAM. Just as you will. —The bailiff! Hey there, Hanfried!

FIFTH SCENE

The SECOND SERVANT - MAID *enters.*
The preceding characters.

SECOND MAID. Greetings from the sexton's wife, Judge Adam.
However much she'd wish the wig —
ADAM. What? No?
SECOND MAID. She says there's preaching in the church this morning;
The sexton himself is wearing one of them.
His other one is not fit to be used,
And must today be sent to the wigmaker's.
ADAM. Be damned!
SECOND MAID. As soon as the sexton gets back home,
However, she'll send his wig to you at once.
ADAM. Upon my honor, gracious Sir —
WALTER. What is it?
ADAM. A cursed accident has taken both
My wigs from me. And now the third one, which
I wished to borrow, cannot be obtained:
And so I must hold court with head quite bald.
WALTER. Baldheaded!
ADAM. Yes, by the eternal Lord!
However much, without my wig's assistance,
I feel concern for my dignity as judge.
Perhaps I'd try out on my tenant farm,
If by chance my tenant — ?
WALTER. Out on the farm!
Can't some one else here in the village — ?
ADAM. No, for a fact —
WALTER. The clergyman, perhaps.
ADAM. The clergyman? He —
WALTER. Or the schoolmaster.
ADAM. Since tithes in kind, your Honor, have been abolished,
To accomplish which I've given official aid,
I can no longer count on them for favors.
WALTER. Well then, my Village Judge? Well? And the court - day?
Do you expect to wait till your hair has grown?
ADAM. If you'll allow me, I'll send out to my farm.

WALTER. How far is it to the farm?
ADAM. Oh, it is scarcely
Half an hour.
WALTER. Half an hour, what?
The hour for your session has long since struck.
Make haste! I must reach Husahe today.
ADAM. Make haste! Yes —
WALTER. Oh, just powder up your head!
But where the devil did you leave your wig?
Oh, do the best you can, for I must hurry.
ADAM. All right.
THE BAILIFF (*enters.*) Here is the bailiff.
ADAM. Can I meanwhile
With a good breakfast of sausages from Brunswick,
A little glass of Danziger —
WALTER. No, thanks.
ADAM. No trouble!
WALTER. Thanks, I said, I've eaten already.
Go; don't waste your time, and I'll use mine
To make a note upon my memorandum.
ADAM. Well, if you so desire. — Come, Marguerite.
WALTER. You are quite badly bruised, dear Justice Adam.
Have you fallen?
ADAM. A truly murderous crash
I took this morning as I got out of bed.
You see, Sir District Judge, it was a crash
Into my room, but I thought 'twas into my grave.
WALTER. Why that's too bad. — I hope it will not be
Of consequence?
ADAM. I don't think so. And yet,
In duty's work it shall not hinder me.
Pardon!
WALTER. Go, go!
ADAM (*to* BAILIFF). Go, call the plaintiffs! — March!

(ADAM, *the* MAID *and the* BAILIFF *exeunt*).

SIXTH SCENE.

FRAU MARTHA, EVE, VEIT *and* RUPRECHT *enter.*
WALTER *and* LIGHT *in the background.*

FRAU MARTHA. You jug-destroying rabble that you are!
You'll make amends, you will!
VEIT. Now just be calm,
Frau Marth'! I'm sure it will all be settled here.
FRAU MARTHA. Oh yes. Be settled. Just see. The clever prattler.
My jug, the broken one is to be settled.
Who'll ever settle for my jug that's settled?
Yes. Here they'll settle that my jug is settled
Once and for all. For such a settlement
I will not give my upset jug's remains.
VEIT. If you can prove that you are right, you hear me?
Then I'll replace it.
FRAU MARTHA. You replace my jug.
If I can prove I'm right, then you'll replace it.
Just place that jug down there, just try it once.
Just place it there upon that shelf! Replace it!
Replace a jug that hasn't a leg to stand on,
Nor aught to lie, nor aught to sit upon!
VEIT. You heard me! Why froth about it? Can one do more?
If one of us has broken your old jug,
Then you shall get amends.
FRAU MARTHA. Get amends.
As if a head of my horned cattle were speaking.
You think that Justice is a potter then?
Even if the High Tribunal came and tied
Their aprons on and put the jug to bake,
They could more readily make something in
The jug than mend the damages. Make amends!
RUPRECHT. Come, father, let the dragon be. Hear me.
It's not the broken jug that's eating her,
But it's the wedding that is broken up,
And which she hopes to patch with violence here.
But I, for one, have set my foot upon it:
And I'll be damned, if e'er I wed that wench.
FRAU MARTHA. The saucy lout! I patch the wedding here!

The wedding, unbroken, not worth the thread for patching,
Not worth a single fragment of my jug.
And if the wedding stood here brightly scoured,
As yesterday my jug stood on my shelf,
I'd seize it by the handle with both hands
And, yelling, crash it soundly on his head.
I have no wish to patch up pieces here.
To patch it!

EVE. Ruprecht!

RUPRECHT. Out, you!

EVE. Dearest Ruprecht!

RUPRECHT. Out of my sight!

EVE. Oh, I beseech you so!

RUPRECHT. The dissolute — ! I dare not mention what.

EVE. Grant me a single word with you in secret —

RUPRECHT. No!

EVE. You soon will join your regiment, oh Ruprecht,
Who knows, when once your musket you have shouldered
If I shall ever see you alive again.
It's war, remember, war to which you're going.
Will you depart from me in such great anger?

RUPRECHT. In anger? No, so help me God, I'll not.
God grant to you prosperity, as much
As he can spare. But if I e'er come back
From out the war with body steeled and sound,
And should I live in Huisum till I'm eighty,
I'd call you till the day I die: A wench!
And you yourself will swear it to the court.

FRAU MARTHA (*to* EVE). Away! What did I say? Do you still wish
To have yourself defamed? Our corporal is
The man for you, the worthy Woodenlegs,
Who wielded the rod in military service,
And not that idiot there who still must bend
His back to catch the blows. Betrothal and wedding
Are today; and were it also baptism,
I'd be at ease. I'll even suffer my burial
When I've trod that arrogance in the dust
Which swells and topples o'er my jugs.

EVE. Oh Mother!

Oh please forget the jug! Let me go try in town
If some one versed in handicrafts can not
Rejoin the fragments so as to suit your pleasure.
And if it can't be mended, take all my savings
And buy yourself a new jug, if you will.
For who would wish for the sake of an earthen jug,
E'en though it dated back to Herod's time,
To raise such racket and to cause such trouble.

FRAU MARTHA. You speak from ignorance. Do you, by chance
Desire to wear the stocks and in the church,
On Sunday next, stand as a penitent?
Your own good name was lodged within this crock
And with it it was ruined before the world;
But not before our God and me and you
The judge, the executioner is my craftsman.
The block and whip-lashes, oh these are needed.
And at the stake that rabble must be burned,
If honor is to burn in pure white flame,
And this jug here's to be reglazed again.

SEVENTH SCENE.

ADAM *in his robes of office, but without wig, enters. The preceding characters.*

ADAM (*aside*). Oh Eva. Look! And that square-shouldered rascal,
That Ruprecht! What the devil! There's his whole tribe!
They won't accuse me and make me my own judge?

EVE. Oh dearest mother, come with me, I beg you.
Let us escape this chamber of misfortune!

ADAM. Old fellow! Tell me: what's the case they bring?
I hear that some one has broken up a jug.

ADAM. A jug! So, so! — Oh, who then broke the jug?

LIGHT. Who has broken it?

ADAM. Yes, dear old fellow.

LIGHT. My Soul! Sit down: then you will soon find out.

ADAM (*secretly*). Dear Eve!

EVE (*likewise*). Go 'way!

ADAM. One word.

EVE. I will hear nothing.
ADAM. Why are you here?
EVE. I tell you to go 'way.
ADAM. Eve dear! I beg you! What does all this mean?
EVE. If you don't straight — ! I say; let me alone.
ADAM (*to* LIGHT). Old fellow, listen, my Soul! I cannot stand it.
The wound here on my shin-bone turns my stomach.
You hear the case and I will go to bed.
LIGHT. To bed — ? You wish — ? I b'lieve that you are crazy.
ADAM. The devil take it. I fear that I must vomit.
LIGHT. I b'lieve you're really crazy. You've just now come — ?
For all I care. Then tell the District Judge.
He might allow it. — I don't know what ails you.
ADAM (*again to* EVE). My Eva, dear, I beg you! By all the wounds!
What is it you bring me here?
EVE. You'll soon find out.
ADAM. Is it just the jug there, which your mother's holding,
Which I, as far — ?
EVE. Yes, just the broken jug.
ADAM. And nothing else?
EVE. Naught else.
ADAM. No? Nothing else?
EVE. I tell you go, and let me be in peace.
ADAM. Hear me, by Heavens, be wise! That's my advice.
EVE. You shameless thing!
ADAM. Here in the note now stands
The name in giant letters, Ruprecht Dimpel.
I carry it ripe and ready in my pocket.
You hear it crackle, Eva? See, you can,
Upon my honor, fetch it in a year
To cut out mourning bodices and aprons,
When you have heard that Ruprecht in Batavia
Cashed in — I know not of what sort of illness,
Of yellow, scarlet or of putrid fever.
WALTER. Don't speak with the contestants, Justice Adam,
Before the session! Sit down and question them.
ADAM. What did he say? What does Your Grace command?

WALTER. What I command? I thought I told you plainly,
That you should not in secret before the session
Indulge in doubtful talk with litigants.
Here is the place which most befits your office,
A public trial is what I'm waiting for.
ADAM (*aside*). Be damned! I can't make up my mind about it — !
— And something crashed just as I took my leave —
LIGHT (*arousing him*). Your Honor! Are you — ?
ADAM. I? No. Upon my honor!
I hung my wig upon it carefully
And must have been an ox —
LIGHT. What?
ADAM. What?
LIGHT. I asked — !
ADAM. You asked if I — ?
LIGHT. If you are deaf, I asked.
His Grace himself has just now called to you.
ADAM. I thought — ! Who calls?
LIGHT. The District Justice there.
ADAM (*to himself*). Oh! The devil take it all! There are two ways,
By Heaven; no more. Who doesn't bend must break.
At once. At once. What does Your Grace command?
Shall I begin the trial at once?
WALTER. You are peculiarly distraught. What's wrong?
ADAM. My word! Beg pardon. One of my guinea hens
That I just purchased from an Indian sailor,
Has pip. I ought to cram it, but I don't know how;
And so I asked that maiden for advice.
I am a fool about such things, you see.
My chickens are the things I call my children.
WALTER. Sit down here. Call the plaintiff and examine him.
And you, our Clerk, you will record the minutes.
ADAM. Does your Grace wish to have this trial conducted
According to formalities of the law,
Or as the custom is right here in Huisum?
WALTER. According to the formalities of the law,
As it is practiced in Huisum, not otherwise.
ADAM. Fine. Fine. I'll strive to do it as you wish.
Are you ready then, my Clerk?

LIGHT. Yes, at your service.
ADAM. Then Justice take your unretarded course!
The plaintiff come forth!
FRAU MARTHA. Here, Sir Village Judge!
ADAM. Who are you?
FRAU MARTHA. Who — ?
ADAM. You.
FRAU MARTHA. Who — I — ?
ADAM. Who are you?
What name, what rank, the place you live, and so on.
FRAU MARTHA. I b'lieve you're joking, Judge.
ADAM. I, joking? what?
I sit here in the name of Justice, Frau Martha,
And Justice now must know just who you are.
LIGHT (*half aloud*). Say, drop such useless questioning —
FRAU MARTHA. You look
In, Sundays, through my window, when you go
To see your country-place!
WALTER. You know the woman?
ADAM. She lives just 'round the corner here, Your Grace,
Just where the footpath crosses through the hedge;
Widow of a lodge-keeper, a midwife now,
An honest woman and beyond reproach.
WALTER. If you are then so well-informed, Your Honor,
All questions of this nature are quite superfluous.
Write down her name into the record-book
And put beside it: "Well-known to the Court."
ADAM. You are not for formalities.
Then that, too, do just as His Grace would have it done.
WALTER. Now ask about the nature of her plea.
ADAM. Now shall I — ?
WALTER. Yes, find out her purpose here!
ADAM. It is, I'm sure, a jug.
WALTER. What's that? You're sure!
ADAM. A jug. A simple jug. Write down: "A jug",
And put beside it: "Well known to the Court."
LIGHT. Upon the speculation which I chanced
Will you, your Honor — ?
ADAM. By Heavens, if I say it,
Then write it down. Isn't it a jug, Frau Martha?
FRAU MARTHA. Yes, this jug here —

ADAM. You see!
FRAU MARTHA. This broken one —
ADAM. A case of pedantry and scruples.
LICHT. I beg you. —
ADAM. And who, then, broke the jug? Of course, that rascal — ?
FRAU MARTHA. Yes, he, that rascal there — .
ADAM (*aside*). I need no more.
RUPRECHT. That is not true, your Honor.
ADAM (*aside*). Up, up, revive, you old man Adam!
RUPRECHT. She's lying to your very face —
ADAM. Shut up, young fool!
You'll put your neck in fetters soon enough.
Write down "a jug" then, Clerk, just as I said,
Together with the name of him who smashed it.
The facts will now be straightway ascertained.
WALTER. Your Honor! What a violent way of acting.
ADAM. How so?
LICHT. Will you not form'lly — ?
ADAM. No. I say;
Your Grace cares naught for bare formalities.
WALTER. If you, Sir Justice Adam, do not know
The method of procedure in this case,
This is not the time and place to teach you.
If you can't mete out justice better than this,
Then yield your seat, perhaps your clerk here can.
ADAM. Beg pardon. I did as here in Huisum is the custom.
Your Grace moreover ordered me to do so.
WALTER. What? I?
ADAM. Upon my honor!
WALTER. I ordered you
To render justice according to the laws.
The laws in Huisum, it was my belief,
Were those which govern everywhere in Holland.
ADAM. I must implore your Grace's most humble pardon!
We have in Huisum, with your kind permission,
Some statutes peculiar to ourselves alone,
Not written, to be sure, but none the less
Inherited by us through tried tradition,
And from this code, I'm bold enough to hope,
I have this day not strayed e'en one iota.

But I'm familiar with your other code,
As it is practiced elsewhere in the kingdom.
Would you have proof! All right, just give me orders!
I can deal justice in one way or the other.

WALTER. I fear you put false meaning on my words.
So be it. Start the trial anew again. —

ADAM. My word! Give heed and you'll be satisfied.
Frau Martha Rull! Will you present your plaint?

FRAU MARTHA. My plaint, you know, concerns this jug of mine.
But grant that I, before I here explain
What has befallen my jug, also describe
What it has meant to me.

ADAM. This is your chance.

FRAU MARTHA. You see this jug, most worthy, reverend Sirs?
You see this jug?

ADAM. Oh yes, of course we see it.

FRAU MARTHA. No, pardon me, you see naught but the fragments.
The most beautiful of jugs is rudely shattered.
Right here, where now's a hole, where you see naught,
The United Provinces of the Netherlands
Were handed over to the Spaniard Philip.
Here, in imperial robes stood Charles the Fifth:
Of whom, you see, his legs alone left standing.
Here Philip knelt as he received the crown:
He now lies in the pot up to the rear
Which also has received a blow, alas.
There his two cousins fair, the queens of France
And Hungary, wiped, both quite moved, the tears
From out their eyes. When now you see the one
Raise up her hand which holds a handkerchief,
It is as if she were weeping for herself.
Here in the train stands bold Sir Philibert
(Protecting whom the emperor caught the blow)
And still leans on his sword. But he should fall,
As well as Maximilian, the rogue!
For under them their swords are broken away.
Here in the middle, in his sacred mitre,
The Archbishop of Arras formerly stood.
But him the devil has taken hide and hair.

His lengthy shadow alone falls o'er the pavement.
Here in the background stood the body-guard
With hallebards and spears in close array;
Here houses on the market-place in Brussels.
Here peeps a prying soul from out his window.
But what he now can see I do not know.

ADAM. Frau Marth'! Spare us the treaty long since scrapped,
Unless it has some bearing on the case.
The hole alone, and not the provinces,
Whose transfer was described, is our concern.

FRAU MARTHA. The beauty of the jug does have some bearing!
The jug was taken as booty by Childeric,
The boilermender, when the Prince of Orange
Took Briel with his bold band of mendicants.
Filled with wine it was, a Spaniard lifted it
Just to his eager mouth when Childeric
Cut down the Spaniard, hitting from behind,
And seized the jug and drained it and went on.

ADAM. A worthy mendicant.

FRAU MARTHA. Inheritance
Then gave the jug to Feargod, who dug graves.
He drank from it but thrice, the sober chap,
And each time were its contents mixed with water.
The first time when, already sixty years,
He married a young wife. Then, three years later,
When he by her became a happy father,
And, after she had borne him sixteen children,
He drank from it the third time, when she died.

ADAM. Fine! That's not bad at all.

FRAU MARTHA. The jug then came
To Zacchaeus, the tailor out in Tirlemont,
Who told with his own mouth to my dead husband,
That which I now desire to tell to you.
When some French troops were plundering, he threw
His jug and household goods out through the window.
He too sprang out and broke his neck, the clown.
This earthen jug, this fragile jug of clay,
However, fell and yet it stood unbroken.

ADAM. Come to the point! I beg you, Martha Rull.

FRAU MARTHA. In the great fire back in sixty - six
My husband had it then, God bless his soul —
ADAM. The devil! Woman! Are you not yet finished?
FRAU MARTHA. If you won't let me speak, Sir Justice Adam,
Then I've come here in vain, and now I'll go
And seek a court where I'll at least be heard.
WALTER. You shall speak here; but not of matters which
Are foreign to your plea. If you but tell us
Your jug was treasured much, then we shall know
As much as we as judges need to know.
FRAU MARTHA. How much you need to know to judge this case
I do not know and do not seek to know.
But this I know that I, to press my case,
Must be allowed to speak at least of something.
WALTER. All right. To close now, what befell the jug?
What? What befell the jug in that great fire
In anno sixty - six? Will you not tell us?
What did befall the jug?
FRAU MARTHA. When then befell it?
Nothing, Sirs, I do declare that nothing
Befell the jug in anno six and sixty.
The jug remained quite whole among the flames
And from the ashes of the house I pulled it,
Both glazed and shining on the morning after,
As if it came straight from the potter's oven.
WALTER. That's good. And now we know the jug. We know
What has befallen it and what has not.
What is there more?
FRAU MARTHA. Now this jug here, you see this jug,
A jug, though broken, worthy yet to be
The jug to grace a noble lady's mouth,
And not unworthy of the regent's lips,
This jug, you two most high and worthy judges,
This jug of mine that rascal there has broken.
ADAM. Who?
FRAU MARTHA. He, that Ruprecht there.
RUPRECHT. That is a lie,
Your Honor.
ADAM. Hold your tongue until you're asked.
You'll have a chance to speak sometime today.

Have you recorded that in the minutes?

LICHT. Oh yes.

ADAM. Relate what happened, worthy Mistress Martha.

FRAU MARTHA. 'Twas yesterday at 'leven —

ADAM. When, did you say?

FRAU MARTHA. At 'leven.

ADAM. In the morning?

FRAU MARTHA. No, beg pardon, at night —
I lie in bed and wish to dim the lamp,
When loud male voices like a very tumult,
Out of my daughter's chamber, far from mine,
As if old Nick'd broken in, quite frighten me.
I hasten quickly down the stairs and find
Her chamber door is broken in by force;
And angry, scolding voices strike my ear.
And when I then make a light upon the scene,
What do I find, Sir Judge? What do I find?
I find the jug lying shattered in the chamber;
In every corner lies a piece.
My daughter wrings her hands, and that jay there,
He fumes like mad in the middle of the room.

ADAM. Oh, curses!

FRAU MARTHA. What!

ADAM. See here, Frau Martha!

FRAU MARTHA. Yes!
And then, as if in my all-righteous rage
Ten arms were added unto me, I feel
As though each one were armed with vulture's talons.
I then begin to question him: What he,
So late at night, desires and why in rage
He broke the jugs he found here in my house.
And can you guess the answer that he gives?
The shameless fellow! Scoundrel that he is!
I'll see him on the rack, or ne'er again
Will rest my weary back upon a bed.
He says another man has knocked the jug
From off the shelf, another, think of it,
Who just had fled from him out of the chamber;
And heaps abuse upon my girl and me.

ADAM. A mere red herring. And then?

FRAU MARTHA. When he speaks thus

I look inquiring at my girl who stands
There like a corpse. I say to her: "My Eve!" —
She seats herself. "Was it some other man?"
I ask. And she cries out: "By Joseph and the Virgin!
What do you think then, Mother?" "Then speak! Who was it?"
"Who else?" — says she. And who else could it be?
And then she swears to me that he had done it.

EVE. What did I swear? What did I swear to you?
I swore you nothing. No — !

FRAU MARTHA. Eve!

EVE. No! You're lying — .

RUPRECHT. There you hear it.

ADAM. Shut up, you cursed hound!
If you don't want my fist to stop your throat!
Your turn comes afterwards, not now.

FRAU MARTHA. You say you didn't — ?

EVE. No, mother, you're deceiving.
It pains me to the bottom of my soul
That I must publicly declare this here:
But I've sworn nothing, nothing have I sworn.

ADAM. But act with sense then, children.

LIGHT. That's quite strange.

FRAU MARTHA. But didn't you assure me, oh my Eva — ?
Did you not call on Joseph and the Virgin?

EVE. Not as an oath! Not swearing! See, this I'll swear to,
And call upon Saint Joseph and the Virgin.

ADAM. Oh friends! Oh now, Frau Martha! What are you doing?
How you intimidate that poor, good child!
When the girl has had a chance to think it over,
And calmly has recalled all that has happened,
— I say all that has happened and that which still
Can happen, should she not speak quite as she ought, —
Just watch, she'll tell us all today as yesterday,
No matter whether she swears to it or not.
Let Joseph and the Virgin out of this game.

WALTER. Oh no, your Honor, no! Whoever could wish
To teach the litigants such doubtful tactics?

FRAU MARTHA. If she can tell me to my very face,
The shameless, dissolute hussy that she is,

That it was some one else, and not that Ruprecht,
Then she, for all of me, can —, I won't say what.
But I, your Honor, I assure you this,
Although I can't affirm she swore to it:
That she did say it yesterday, that I'll swear,
And Joseph and the Virgin I call to witness.

ADAM. And now the girl no longer will —

WALTER. Your Honor!

ADAM. Your Grace? — What is't? — Isn't it so, dear Eve?

FRAU MARTHA. Now out with it! Did you not tell me that?
Didn't you tell me yesterday? Didn't you?

EVE. Who denies that I said it —

ADAM. There you have it.

RUPRECHT. The dirty wench!

ADAM. Make note.

VEIT. Fie, shame on her.

WALTER. Of this performance of yours, Sir Justice Adam,
I know not what to think. If you yourself
Had broken the jug in question, you could not
Attempt more energetically to shift suspicion
From your own person to this young man here.
Hear, Clerk; I hope you'll enter in your records
Naught save the fact that the maiden now admits
Her yesterday's confession, but not the deed.
— Is it now the maiden's turn to make a statement?

ADAM. My soul, if it isn't her turn just yet,
In such things human nature errs, Your Grace.
Whom should I now interrogate? The accused?
My word! I always accept advice that's good.

WALTER. How very naïve! Yes, question the accused.
Question and make an end of it. Please do!
This is the last case you will ever try.

ADAM. The last one! What! Yes, really! The accused!
What were you thinking of this time, old judge?
Cursed be my guinea hen that has the pip!
Would that it had croaked of plague in India!
That noodle-dumpling is always on my mind.

WALTER. What's on? What sort of dumpling is on —

ADAM. The noodle-dumpling
Which, with your pardon, I wished to give my hen.
And if the beast won't swallow down the pill,

My soul, I do not know just what will happen.
WALTER. Just do your duty, I tell you, by perdition!
ADAM. Defendant, now come forth.
RUPRECHT. I'm here, your Honor.
Ruprecht, Veit's, the cotter's son, of Huisum.
ADAM. Have you then heard what in this court just now
Frau Martha dared to testify against you?
RUPRECHT. Yes, Sir Village Judge, I heard it.
ADAM. Will you then dare
To offer opposition to it? Huh?
Do you confess or dare you undertake
To disavow it, a God-forgotten man?
RUPRECHT. What have I to oppose to her accusal,
Your Honor? Oh, with your kind permission,
No word that she has spoken here is true.
ADAM. So? And that you think that you can prove?
RUPRECHT. Oh yes.
ADAM. The honorable Frau Martha there —
Let her keep cool and calm. We'll soon find out.
WALTER. Why should Frau Martha cause the Judge concern?
ADAM. Why me — ? By God! Should I a Christian — ?
WALTER. Report
What you would now adduce in your behalf.
Do you know, Mr. Clerk, how to conduct a trial?
ADAM. What? What?
LICHT. If I — oh, well, well if your Highness —
ADAM. Why do you stare? What have you to depose?
Does the ass stand there just like an ox?
What have you to depose?
RUPRECHT. What I depose?
WALTER. Yes, you. It's you must now relate the story.
RUPRECHT. My soul, if they would only let me speak.
WALTER. Why, Judge! Such conduct cannot be endured.
RUPRECHT. It mighta been 'bout ten o'clock at night, —
A January night, but just as warm
As May. Then I say to my father: "Father!
I want to go and visit Eve a little."
For you must know I was to marry her,
A sturdy gal she is. I noticed how
At harvest time she handled work with ease.
The hay flew fast, just like a frightened mouse.

I asked her: "Will you?" and she answered "Oh!
How you do cackle." Then later she said "Yes".

ADAM. You keep to your subject, please. Cackle! What?
I asked her "Will you?" And she answered "Yes".

RUPRECHT. Yes, on my word, your Honor.

WALTER. Further! Further!

RUPRECHT. Well —
Then I said: "Father, listen! Will you let me?"
A little while we chatted by the window.
'Well," says he, "run along. You'll stay outdoors?"
"Yes, by my Soul," say I, "I'll swear to that."
"Well, go", says he, "but be back here by 'leven."

ADAM. Go on and talk and chatter without end,
Well, will you soon quit talking?

RUPRECHT. "Well", say I:
"That is agreed." And I put on my cap
And go; and try to take the bridge and
Go back through town, because the brook was swollen.
Hell and damnation, Ruprecht! then I thought.
Now Martha's garden-gate is surely closed.
For just till ten the daughter leaves it open.
If I'm not there by ten I do not come.

ADAM. Such low-down way of doing things.

WALTER. And then?

RUPRECHT. Then — as I pass beneath the linden-lane,
Near Martha's, where the trees are thickly arched,
And darker than the minster is in Utrecht,
I hear the distant garden-gate acreaking.
See there! There is my Eve still! I say
And send my eyes with joy to that dark spot
From whence my ears had brought me the report —
And call them blind, when they return to me,
And send them quickly forth the second time,
That they might search the better. Then I scold
Them, good-for-nothing slanderers, and worse,
Inciters, low-down scandal-mongers,
And send them forth a third time and I think
That, having done their duty, they madly want
To leap from out my head and give themselves
Into some other service than my own.
It is my Eve. I know her by her dress.

Another man is with her too.

ADAM. So? Still another? Who? You babbling fool!

RUPRECHT. Who? Yes, my Soul! Do you ask me? Well?

ADAM. Oh well!

Whom you did not take we cannot wake, I guess.

WALTER. On! Further with your speech! Let him alone!

Why do you interrupt him, Village Judge?

RUPRECHT. I cannot swear it by the Sacrament,
Pitch-dark it was, and then all cats are gray.
But you must know that he who mends our shoes,
That Lebrecht, who was late a 'prentice-boy,
Has long been running 'round to see my gal.
I told her 'way last Autumn: "Eve, look here;
That rogue hangs 'round your house and I don't like it.
Tell him that you're no pickings for his kind,
Or, by my Soul, I'll throw him out your door."
She says: "You're vexing", and tells him something
That's neither here nor there, nor fish nor fowl.
Then I go in and throw the rascal out.

ADAM. The rascal's name is Lebrecht?

RUPRECHT. Yes, Lebrecht.

ADAM. Good.

We have a name. The rest we'll soon find out.
Have you recorded that in the minutes, Clerk?

LIGHT. Oh, yes, and all the rest, so please Your Honor.

ADAM. Speak on, then, Ruprecht, my dear son.

RUPRECHT. And now,
When after eleven I meet this loving pair,
— I always left at ten — my eyes are opened.
I think: Wait, Ruprecht, still you have a chance.
The stag's horns do not yet adorn your brow.
You must take care and feel your brow once more
To see if horns have started sprouting there.
I gently enter through the garden-gate
And hide myself behind the old yew-hedge.
I hear a whispering here, a joking there,
A tugging and a scuffling too, your Honor.
My Soul! I think. I shall for longing —

EVE. You villain!

Oh, how disgraceful 'tis of you!

FRAU MARTHA. You scoundrel!

I'll show you yet, when I get you alone,
That I have teeth, just wait! You don't yet know
The stuff that I am made of! But you'll find out!

RUPRECHT. A quarter-hour they act thus. Then I think
Whate'er comes next, today is sure no wedding?
And ere I was quite finished with this thought,
Whiz ! ! they're in the house before seeing the parson.

EVE. Go, Mother, now just let happen whate'er will —

ADAM. Shut up, you there, I say. The thunder storm
Is striking down on you, uninvited gossip!
Wait till I call you to make your speech.

WALTER. Quite strange indeed, by Heavens!

RUPRECHT. My blood, Judge Adam, now boils,
As if an artery would break.
A button springs from off my doublet. Air, now!
I pull my doublet off and cry: "Air! Air!"
And go and push and kick and thunder there,
On finding that the hussy's door is locked,
Till with one mighty kick I push it in.

ADAM. Bright boy you are!

RUPRECHT. Just as it rattles open,
The jug falls down from off the shelf inside,
And — whizz! — a man jumps out the window too.
I just can see his coat-tails flying after.

ADAM. Was it that Lebrecht?

RUPRECHT. Who else then, your Honor?
The girl stands there. I push her in a heap
And hastening to the window, find the scamp
Still hanging on the pickets of the trellis,
There where the grape-vine twines up to the roof.
And since the door-knob clung tight in my hand
When I came thundering in, I slam him one
With that great pound of steel straight on his pate
Which, by good chance, your Honor, I just could reach.

ADAM. Was it a knob?

RUPRECHT. What?

ADAM. Was it — ?

RUPRECHT. Yes, a door-knob, yes.

ADAM. That's why.

LIGHT. You thought, perhaps, it was a dagger?

ADAM. A dagger? I — ? How's that?

RUPRECHT. A dagger!
LIGHT. Oh, well!
One can sometimes hear wrong. A door-knob, too,
Has very much in common with a dagger.
ADAM. I think — !
LIGHT. Upon my word! The shaft, your Honor?
ADAM. The shaft!
RUPRECHT. The shaft! But that's not what it was.
It was the other end of that old knob.
ADAM. The other end of that old knob it was!
LIGHT. So! So!
RUPRECHT. But on the handle was a lump of
Lead like a dagger's hilt; that I must say.
ADAM. Yes, like a hilt.
LIGHT. Good. Like a dagger's hilt.
A weapon of some dreadful sort it surely
Must have been. That I knew well.
WALTER. To business, Sirs. Now please keep to your business!
ADAM. Naught but tomfoolery, Sir Clerk! Proceed!
RUPRECHT. The scamp falls down and I'm about to turn
When in the dark I see him getting up.
I think: You still alive? I climb to the window
And wish to put an end to all his going.
When now, my Sirs, as I'm about to jump,
A great handful of sand of coarsest grain
Scattering like hail flies straight into my eyes.
— And man and night and world and window-sill,
On which I stand, it seems, so help me God,
All fall together in one heap of darkness.
ADAM. Be damned! See that! Who did it?
RUPRECHT. Who? That Lebrecht.
ADAM. The scoundrel!
RUPRECHT. My word! If it was really he.
ADAM. Who else?
RUPRECHT. As if a rain storm pitched me down
Ten fathoms from a mountain to an abyss
Thus do I fall from off the window sill.
It seems as though I'm crashing through the floor.
And still I do not break my neck, nor yet
My back, nor hip, nor aught; but in this time

I lost my chance to lay hands on that scamp.
Then I sit up and wipe my injured eyes.
She comes and cries: "O Lord! O my poor Ruprecht!"
"What's injured you?" My Soul! I raised my foot,
'Twas good I did not see which way I kicked. —

ADAM. And did the sand cause that?

RUPRECHT. That blast of sand.

ADAM. By God! Well aimed!

RUPRECHT. And then, when I get up,
Why should I soil my fists upon her here?
I scold her and I call her: low-down wench,
And think that such is good enough for her,
But tears well up to choke my very words.
For when Frau Martha comes into the room
And brings a lamp and I behold the girl
Who stands before me trembling, that's a pity,
She who was wont to look so free from care,
Then to myself I say: The blind are blessed.
And I'd have given my eyes to whom so willed
That he might play a game of marbles with them.

EVE. He doesn't deserve, the villain —

ADAM. Will you keep quiet!

RUPRECHT. The rest you know.

ADAM. What do you mean — the rest?

RUPRECHT. Oh well, Frau Martha came and spilled her venom,
And Ralph, their neighbor, came and neighbor Hinz,
And cousin Sue and cousin Liza came,
And men and maids, and dogs and cats all came.
It was a spectacle. Frau Martha asked
The maiden there: Who it was that smashed the jug;
And she, she said, you know, that I had done it.
My Soul, she wasn't very wrong, dear Sirs,
I smashed the mug which she used once too often,
And now a hole adorns the cobbler's head. —

ADAM. Frau Martha! What reply would you now make?
Speak up!

FRAU MARTHA. What I'd reply to such as that?
His speech. your Honor, comes stealing like a martin
And strangles truth as 'twere a cackling hen.
Whoe'er loves justice should seize a mighty club
And quite wipe out this monster of the night.

ADAM. Then you will have to furnish us the proof.
FRAU MARTHA. Oh yes, indeed. Here is my witness. Speak.
ADAM. Your daughter? No, Frau Martha.
WALTER. No? Why not?
ADAM. As witness, gracious Sir? Does not the law-book say,
In section *quarto* is it? Or in *quinto?*
When jugs, or what they be — how should I know? —
Are smashed or broken by young jackanapes,
Then daughters may not witness for their mothers?
WALTER. Within your head lie knowledge and base error
Completely kneaded together like a dough.
With every piece you give me some of each.
The girl's not yet a witness, she but explains now.
If, and for whom, she can and will bear witness
Will first be learned from this, her explanation.
ADAM. Yes, explanation. Good. In section *sexto.*
But what she says one won't believe.
WALTER. Step up, my dear young child.
ADAM. Hey, Liz'! — Beg pardon!
My tongue's become quite parched. —Oh, Marguerite!

EIGHTH SCENE.

A MAID *enters.*
The preceding characters.

ADAM. A glass of water! —
THE MAID. At once.
ADAM. Will you not also — ?
WALTER. No, thank you.
ADAM. French or Moselle? Whate'er you wish.
(WALTER *bows;* THE MAID *brings water and departs.*)

NINTH SCENE.

WALTER, ADAM, FRAU MARTHA, *etc., without the maid.*

ADAM. If I may freely speak my will, your Grace,
This case seems fitted for a compromise.
WALTER. For compromise? That is not clear, Your Honor.

Intell'gent folk can surely compromise,
But how you would effect such thing already,
Now, when the case has not been unravelled,
It would indeed give me great joy to hear.
How do you think you'd bring that end about?
Have you already formed an opinion?

ADAM. My Soul!
If I, since law doth leave me in the lurch,
Should call philosophy to be my aid,
Then 'twas — that Lebrecht. —

WALTER. Who?

ADAM. Or Ruprecht there.

WALTER. Who?

ADAM. Or Lebrecht — who smashed up the jug.

WALTER. Who was it then? Was't Lebrecht or was't Ruprecht?
You're groping with your judgment, so it seems,
Just like a hand in a bag full of peas.

ADAM. Permit!

WALTER. Be quiet, please.

ADAM. Well, as you will.
'Pon my word, it would be all right with me
If it were both of them that did the deed.

WALTER. Ask there and you'll find out.

ADAM. Most gladly, Sir.
But I'll be damned if you will find it out.
Have you your minute - book now all prepared?

LIGHT. Completely.

ADAM. Good.

LIGHT. I start a brand new page
And yearn to know what will be written on it.

ADAM. A brand new page? That's fine.

WALTER. Speak now, my child.

ADAM. Speak, Eve, don't you hear? Speak now, Miss Eve!
Give God, you hear, my dear, give, oh my Soul.
Him and the world, give him aught of the truth.
Think that you stand there 'fore God's judgment seat
And you must never dare aggrieve your judge
With falsehood and with chatter which does not
Concern this case. Oh yes! You're sensible.
A judge, you know, is ever but a justice,

Today he serves this one, tomorrow that.
If you should say 'twas Lebrecht, all is well!
And should you say 'twas Ruprecht, also well!
Speak thus, or thus, and I'm no honest man
If things don't happen just as you would have them.
If you should wish to gossip of another,
A third, perchance, and mention stupid names,
Then, child, take care; I'll tell you nothing further.
In Huisum, damn it, no one will believe you,
And no one, Eve, in the Netherlands.
You know the white-washed walls can tell no tales.
He too will know how to defend himself,
And great misfortune will befall your Ruprecht.

WALTER. If you would only let your talking be!
It's idle gossip without point or plan.

ADAM. Do you not understand it, Sir?

WALTER. Get on!
Too long you've spoken idly from the bench.

ADAM. Surely, Sir, I am no learned man.
And if I'm not quite clear to men from Utrecht,
Perhaps it's different with the plain folk here.
I'll bet the maiden knows just what I wish.

FRAU MARTHA. What is all this? Speak boldly what you know!

EVE. Oh dearest mother!

FRAU MARTHA. You! I'm warning you!

RUPRECHT. My Soul! Frau Martha, it's hard to speak out bold
When a bad conscience stops one's very throat.

ADAM. Keep still, smart Aleck! Don't you chirp.

FRAU MARTHA. Who was't?

EVE. Oh Christ!

FRAU MARTHA. That booby there! The low-down scamp!
O Lord! As if my daughter were a whore.
Was it the Christ, you say?

ADAM. Frau Martha! Stupid!
What sort of — ? Now just let the maiden speak!
To scare the good child thus — whore. Mutton-head!
We'll make no headway thus. Just let her think.

RUPRECHT. Oh yes, just think.

ADAM. You bumpkin there, shut up!

RUPRECHT. She soon will call the shoe-repairer to mind.
ADAM. The devil! Call the bailiff! Hanfried! Ho!
RUPRECHT. All right! I'll hush, your Honor. Let things be.
It won't be long; she'll hit upon my name.
FRAU MARTHA. Look here! Don't make a spectacle of me.
It's nine and forty years I've lived in honor,
And gladly would I live my fiftieth.
My birthday's on the third of February.
Today's the first. So make it short. Who was it?
ADAM. All right! I'm quite agreed, Frau Martha Rull!
FRAU MARTHA. Her father said when he passed on: "Hear Martha,
Get for your girl an upright husband, dear.
Should she become a good-for-nothing wench,
Then give the man who digs the graves a coin
And let him lay me on my back again:
My Soul, I think I'd turn over in my grave."
ADAM. Well, that's not bad at all.
FRAU MARTHA. If you, my Eve,
Would honor father and mother and keep the fourth
Commandment well and good, then say: Into my chamber
I let the cobbler or some other man.
But not the man I am to wed. You hear?
RUPRECHT. I pity her. Forget the jug, I pray.
I'll take it down to Utrecht. Such a jug —
I would that I myself had broken it.
EVE. Oh most ignoble, you! Oh shame on you
That you won't say: All right, I broke the jug!
Fie! Ruprecht, fie! Oh shame on you that you
Can't simply trust me in this whole affair.
Did I not give my hand and answer: Yes,
When you entreated: "Eve, will you have me?"
And do you think the cobbler is more worthy?
E'en had you peeped in through the key-hole then
And seen me drinking from the jug with Lebrecht
You should have thought: My Eve, she is too good,
This whole affair will clear up to her credit,
If not in this life, in the Great Beyond,
For the Last Judgment Day will be her chance.
RUPRECHT. My Soul, dear Eve, I cannot wait that long,
For what my senses behold, that I believe.

EVE. Suppose we grant that it was Lebrecht,
Why then — may Heaven strike me dead — had I
Not instantly confided it to you alone?
But why before our neighbors, maids, and servants —
Suppose that I had reason to conceal it,
Why then, oh Ruprecht, should I not have said,
Relying on your trust, — that it was you?
Why should I not? Please say: Why should I not?

RUPRECHT. Oh then, the devil, say it. I don't care,
If you can save yourself the stocks' disgrace.

EVE. Oh you most loathsome man! Ungrateful one!
Yes, you deserve that I be spared the stocks!
Deserve that I should speak and save my honor,
And with one word bring you to eternal perdition.

WALTER. So — ? And this single word — ? Don't keep us so.
It was not Ruprecht then, you say?

EVE. No, gracious Sir, if he will have it so,
'Twas only for his sake I kept my silence.
The earthen jug was not destroyed by Ruprecht.
If he himself denies it, you can believe him.

FRAU MARTHA. Eve! It was not Ruprecht?

EVE. No, mother, no!
And if I said so yesterday, 'twas a lie.

FRAU MARTHA. You! I will break your bones for you!
(*She sets the jug down.*)

EVE. Do what you will.

WALTER (*threatening*). Frau Martha!

ADAM. Hey! The bailiff!
Throw her out of here, that 'cursed hag!
Why did it have to be just Ruprecht, pray?
Did you, perhaps, assist them in this crime?
I guess the maiden ought to know the man:
And I'm a rogue, if it was not Lebrecht.

FRAU MARTHA. Was it that Lebrecht, then? Then was it Lebrecht?

ADAM. Speak, Eve, was it not Lebrecht then, my dear?

EVE. You shameless man, you low-down fellow, you!
How can you say that it was Lebrecht —

WALTER. Girl!
What do you mean by that? Is that the way

You show respect that's due unto your judge?

EVE. Oh! What! That Justice there! But worthy to stand
Himself a wretched sinner at the bar —
He, who knows quite well the one it was!
(*Turning to the Village Judge*).
Did you not then just yesterday send Lebrecht
To Utrecht to the Commissioners of Conscription
With a certificate addressed to them?
How can you say that it was Lebrecht then,
When you know well that he is still in Utrecht?

ADAM. Well, who else then if it was not Lebrecht? Hell!
Not Ruprecht and not Lebrecht — What do you mean?

RUPRECHT. My Soul, Sir Justice Adam, I'll tell you true,
In this the girl most surely is not lying,
For I myself met Lebrecht yesterday,
As he, at eight o'clock, set out for Utrecht;
And if he did not drive in a conveyance
The rascal, with the crooked legs he has,
Could not have hobbled back by ten last night.
Indeed she may have had a third man there.

ADAM. What's that? Bow-legged? Mutton-head! That boy
Can shake a shoe as well as any one.
I hope to be a reptile or a fish,
If any shepherd dog of middle size
Would not needs trot to keep in pace with him.

WALTER. Now tell us just what happened.

ADAM. Your pardon, Sir!
In this the girl can scarcely be of service.

WALTER. Not be of service? Not be of service? Why not?

ADAM. A silly child, you see, she's good but silly.
Quite young and just confirmed. She blushes deep
When from afar she but beholds a beard.
Her kind of people suffer it when it's dark
But when it's day, deny it to the court.

WALTER. I find you quite considerate, Justice Adam,
Quite mild in all things that concern the girl.

ADAM. If I must speak the truth, Sir District Judge,
Her father was a good old friend of mine.
And if Your Grace would show his grace today,
Then let us do no more than is our duty

And let his daughter go unharmed.

WALTER. I feel within me great desire, your Honor,
To probe this case unto its very bottom —
Be bold, my child, and tell us who broke the jug,
And there is no one in your presence now
Who could not pardon you this single error.

EVE. My dearest, worthy and most gracious Sir,
Excuse me from relating what went on.
And think not evil of my blank refusal.
It's Heaven's wonderful decree which bids
Me close my mouth in this unusual case.
That Ruprecht did not break the jug I'll swear,
Confirm it with an oath, if you demand it,
Upon the steps of any holy altar.
But that affair which happened yesterday
In all its other phases is my own,
And Mother has no right now to demand
The skein of yarn in its entirety
Because one strand that's her's runs through the whole.
I cannot here announce who broke the jug,
For then I'd have to touch upon some secrets
— Not wholly mine — which don't concern the jug.
Sooner or later I will confide in her
But this tribunal here is not the place
Where she has rights to question me about it.

ADAM. She has no right, upon my honor, no!
The maiden knows just where our check-reins dangle.
If she will swear her oath here to the court
Her mother's plaint is then quite lost
And no objection can be made to that.

WALTER. What says Frau Martha to this explanation?

FRAU MARTHA. If I at once can utter naught important,
Believe me, gracious Sir, I beg you do,
A stroke has just now paralyzed my tongue.
Examples enough there are of wretched men
Who, to redeem their honor in the world,
Have perjured themselves before the seat of justice,
To swear false oaths upon a holy altar
To get one's self into a seat of shame
This the world witnesses for the first time.
Were it but proven that some other man,

Not Ruprecht, yesterday, sneaked into her chamber,
Were that but possible, most gracious Sir,
Believe me, Sir, I'd not delay one moment,
As her first dower-gift I'd place her chair
Before my door and say: Now go, my child,
The world is wide and there you pay no rent,
And long hair too you have inherited
By which you can, when the time comes, hang yourself.

WALTER. Be calm, be calm, Frau Martha.

FRAU MARTHA. Yes, but since
I still can furnish proof another way
Than just through her who now denies me aid,
And since I'm full convinced that it was he,
And no one else, who broke my precious jug,
The very strength with which they would deny it
Calls forth in me most scandalous suspicions.
The night of yesterday conceals a crime
Quite other than the violence done my jug.
I must announce, your Honor, this Ruprecht here
Is subject to conscription. In a few days
He must in Utrecht swear his flag allegiance.
These youthful citizens oft run away.
Suppose that he had said the other night:
"What say you, Eve? Oh come, the world is wide.
To chest and coffer I know you have the key,"
And she had then resisted him a little,
Then might, perchance, have happened, since I troubled them,
— On his part from revenge, on hers from love —
Just what has happened, just what we have heard.

RUPRECHT. You stinking vulture! What's this rot you speak?
To chest and coffer —

WALTER. Still!

EVE. What! He desert?

WALTER. To business here! We're speaking of the jug. —
It's proof we need. Some proof that Ruprecht broke it!

FRAU MARTHA. Allright, your Honor, first I'll prove right here
That Ruprecht broke my jug to pieces
And then I'll go and look around at home.
But hear; I'll bring a tongue to bear me witness

For every single word that he has spoken,
And would have brought them in array at once,
If I had had the least remote suspicion
That this girl here would not use hers for me.
But if you summon here Frau Bridget soon,
Who is his aunt, she will suffice for me.
For she will render null their main contention,
For she at half past ten out in the garden,
— Note well, before the jug was broken, —
Had met him there conversing with my Eve.
And how this fiction which he has made up
Will fall thus cloven through from head to foot
By her one tongue alone, oh noble Judges,
That I'll let you judge to suit yourselves.

RUPRECHT. Who heard me — ?

VEIT. Sister Briggy?

RUPRECHT. Me with Eve? In the garden?

FRAU MARTHA. Him with my Eve in the garden, half past ten,
Before, according to his chatter, at eleven,
He broke with force in at her chamber door.
In conversation, fondling now, now scolding,
As if he wished to win her to his purpose.

ADAM (*to himself*). Be damned! The devil's on my side.

WALTER. Go bring that woman here.

RUPRECHT. My sirs, I beg you:
Not a word is true. Impossible!

ADAM. Oh wait, you rascal you. Hey! Bailiff! Hanfried! —
For it's in flight that jugs are easily broken —
Now, Clerk, you go and bring Frau Bridget here!

VEIT. Look here, you cursed scoundrel, what's your game?
I'll break your bones for you.

RUPRECHT. And what for, then?

VEIT. Well, why didn't you admit that you and the girl
At half past ten were fussing in the garden?
Why did you hide it?

RUPRECHT. Why did I hide the fact?
God's thunder and lightning, father, it's not true!
If Auntie Briggy says it is, then hang me.
And, if you will, hang by the legs, her, too.

VEIT. If she so testifies — then you look out!

You and that prudish virgin Eve there.
Howe'er much you dissemble 'fore the court,
You both seek shelter under a single cover.
A scandalous secret lies hidden somewhere here.
She knows of it but, to shield you, she says nothing.

RUPRECHT. A secret? What?

VEIT. Why did you pack your things?
Heh? Why did you pack your things up yester-even?

RUPRECHT. My things?

VEIT. Yes, coats and pants, and linens too?
A bundle such as one who's journeying
Throws o'er his shoulder?

RUPRECHT. 'Cause I must go to Utrecht!
By Heavens! I must go join my regiment!
You think that I — ?

VEIT. To Utrecht? Yes to Utrecht!
You've hastened so to get away to Utrecht!
Two days ago you did not know if you
Should leave in five days or in six from now.

WALTER. Do you know aught to help us here, old man?

VEIT. Most righteous Judge, I will make no assertion.
I was at home the night the jug was broken,
And also of another undertaking,
To tell the truth, I have as yet seen nothing, —
When I have weighed each single circumstance, —
Which might make me suspicious of my son,
But quite convinced of his full innocence.
I have come here to break his promise of marriage
When you have settled the contest now in hand,
To get again the little silver chain
Together with the medal which he gave
The girl last Fall as token of engagement.
What now of flight, what now of treachery
Is being heaped on my gray head, high Sirs,
That's all as new to me as 'tis to you.
In that case may the devil break his neck.

WALTER. Get me Frau Bridget, please, Sir Justice Adam!

ADAM. Does this case not fatigue you much, your Honor?
It seems to me so very long drawn out.
Your Honor has still my book of cash accounts,
And then my record-book. What time is it?

LIGHT. It just has struck the half.
ADAM. Past ten?
LIGHT. No, Sir! Past 'leven.
WALTER. All right.
ADAM. I h'lieve the time or you must sure be crazy,
(*He looks at his watch*).
As I'm an honest man. — What is your wish?
WALTER. It's my opinion —
ADAM. To shut up shop? That's good — !
WALTER. No, sir. It's my opinion to continue.
ADAM. It's your opinion — All right. For else I would,
Upon my honor, tomorrow morning, at nine,
Complete the case to your full satisfaction.
WALTER. You know now what I wish.
ADAM. As you command.
Now, Clerk, send out the bailiffs with the order
To bring Frau Bridget to this court at once.
WALTER. And now — to save me time, which I much prize —
You'll kindly show some interest in this case.
(LIGHT *exit*).

TENTH SCENE.

The preceding characters without LIGHT.
Later, several maids.

ADAM (*standing up*). Meanwhile could we, if it so please your Honor,
Vacate our seats and get some air — ?
WALTER. Hm! Oh yes.
What I desired to say —
ADAM. Will you allow
The litigants likewise, till Frau Bridget comes — ?
WALTER. What? The litigants?
ADAM. Yes, out of doors —
WALTER (*aside*). Be damned!
(*Aloud*). Sir Justice Adam, you know something?
Give me a glass of wine to fill the pause.
ADAM. With all my heart I will. Hey, Marguerite!
You make me happy, your Honor. Marguerite!
THE MAID. Here.

ADAM. What would you like? — Get out, you people.
French? — Out in the entry hall. — Or from the Rhine?
WALTER. Some from the Rhine.
ADAM. Good. — Till I call, get out!
WALTER. Where to?
ADAM. Go, bottles with seals on, Marguerite —
What? In the hallway there. Here. Here's the key.
WALTER. Hm. Wait.
ADAM. Out! March, I say! — Go, Marguerite!
And butter freshly churned and cheese from Limberg,
And fat and nicely smoked Pomeranian goose.
WALTER. Wait! Just a moment! Not so much ado!
I beg it of you, worthy Justice.
ADAM. Go
To the devil, I tell you! Do just as I say!
WALTER. Are you sending the folks away, Sir Judge?
ADAM. Your Honor?
WALTER. Are you?
ADAM. They're going out, if you permit.
But just until Frau Bridget comes.
Or should they not, perhaps — ?
WALTER. Well, as you will.
But do you think it will be worth the trouble?
Is't your opinion that much time will pass
Before they find Frau Bridget?
ADAM. Today is wood-day,
Most worthy Sir, and many women are
Out in the pines collecting kindling-wood.
It might quite well —
RUPRECHT. No, Auntie is at home.
WALTER. At home. 'Tis well.
RUPRECHT. She'll be here right away.
WALTER. She'll be here right away. Bring forth the wine.
ADAM (*aside*). Be damned!
WALTER. Make haste. But nothing will I eat
Except a piece of dry bread and some salt.
ADAM (*aside*). For but two moments with the gal alone —
(*aloud*). What! But dry bread! And salt! Go on!
WALTER. Oh yes.
ADAM. At least a piece of good Limburger cheese—
Cheese whets the tongue that it may taste the wine.

WALTER. All right. A piece of cheese, but nothing else.
ADAM. Now go and spread the cloth of damask white.
Let all be plain but good.
(MAID *exit.*)
That's the advantage
With us damned bachelor-folk. What others are
Compelled each day to share with care and sparing
With wife and children, we, whene'er we please
With some good friend, completely unconcerned,
Enjoy in full.
WALTER. But what I wished to say —
Where did you get that wound of yours, dear Judge?
A wicked hole, forsooth, that in your head!
ADAM. — I fell.
WALTER. You fell. Oh, so. When? Was't last evening?
ADAM. Today at half past five. This morning, Sir.
Just as I wished to rise from out my bed.
WALTER. Over what?
ADAM. Over — gracious District Judge.
To tell the truth, I stumbled o'er myself.
I fell head foremost up against my stove,
Until this hour I really don't know why.
WALTER. Fell backwards?
ADAM. What? Fall backwards?
WALTER. Or face first?
You have two wounds, one forward and one aft.
ADAM. Both front and back. Oh Marguerite!
(*Both maids enter with wine, etc. They set the table and exeunt*).
WALTER. What's that?
ADAM. First thus, then thus. First on the stove's sharp edge,
Which pushed my brow in here, and then I fell
Down backwards to the floor and there I struck
The back part of my head a fearful blow.
(*Pours out wine*).
Will you not drink, Sir?
WALTER (*takes the glass*). If you but had a wife,
I should imagine the case quite differently,
Sir Justice.
ADAM. How so?

WALTER. Yes, by my honor,
I see you scraped and scratched all over so.
ADAM (*laughs*). No, God be thanked! It's not from woman's nails.
WALTER. Another advantage for the bachelors, I believe.
ADAM (*continuing to laugh*). Branches for my silk-worms that were placed
There in the corner by the stove to dry.
And now, here's to your health!
(*They drink*).
WALTER. And just today
To lose your periwig in such strange manner!
It would at least have hidden your wounds for you.
ADAM. Yes, yes, but evils always come as twins.
Here. — This is nice and fat. — May I? —
WALTER. A bit.
Is't Limberg?
ADAM. D'rect from Limberg, worthy Sir.
WALTER. And how the devil did you say that happened?
ADAM. What?
WALTER. That you have parted with your periwig.
ADAM. You see, last evening I sat down to read
A document, and since I had mislaid
My glasses, I bent down so low to read
The case, that by the candle-flame's bright glow
My periwig caught fire. I, I think:
Fire falls from Heaven upon my sinful head,
To seize the wig and cast it far from me;
But ere I have unloosed the ribbon-ties
The wig flames up like Sodom and Gomorrah
So that I barely save my last three hairs.
WALTER. Hm, curses! And your other one's in town?
ADAM. Yes, at the periwig-maker's. —But let's to business.
WALTER. But not too fast, I beg you, Justice Adam.
ADAM. Oh, well! The hours fly. Here, have a glass.
(*He pours out wine*).
WALTER. Poor Lebrecht — if that codger told the truth —
Has likewise had a very wicked fall.
ADAM. Upon my honor. (*He drinks*).
WALTER. And if the case before us
Remains unraveled, — I almost fear it will —

You will be able, here in your small town
To recognize the culprit by his wounds. (*He drinks*).
Niersteiner wine?

ADAM. What?

WALTER. Or good Oppenheimer?

ADAM. Niersteiner. Look! Upon my honor! You can tell.
From Nierstein, gracious Sir, as if I'd fetched it.

WALTER. I tried it at the wine press three years ago.
(ADAM *pours out wine again*).
How high then is your window? — You! Frau Martha!

FRAU MARTHA. My window?

WALTER. The window of that chamber, yes,
In which the maiden sleeps?

FRAU MARTHA. Her chamber is
But in the second floor, a cellar beneath it,
The window scarcely nine feet from the ground.
And yet the whole quite well - thought - out arrangement
Is very awkward if one wants to jump.
For two feet from the wall a grape vine stands
Which spreads its knotty branches on a trellis,
That runs along the wall's entire length.
The very window is entwined in vines.
A boar well - armed with heavy tusks would have
A heavy task to break his way through this.

ADAM. And none hung in it either.
(*He fills his glass*).

WALTER. What's that?

ADAM. Nothing! (*He drinks*).

WALTER (*to* RUPRECHT). Where did you hit the sinner? On the head?

ADAM. Here.

WALTER. Wait.

ADAM. Giv't here.

WALTER. It's still half full.

ADAM. I'll fill it.

WALTER. Can't you hear?

ADAM. Oh, just to make good measure.

WALTER. I beg you.

ADAM. According to the Pythagorean rule.
(*He fills his glass*).

WALTER (*again to* RUPRECHT). How often did you hit the

sinner's head?

ADAM. One is the Lord; the second, Chaos black;
The third, the World. Three glasses have my praise.
Of the third glass each drop tastes like a Sun,
And each succeeding glass like firmaments.

WALTER. How often did you hit the sinner's head?
You, Ruprecht, you I ask!

ADAM. Shall we hear it?
How often did you hit the 'scape-goat? Speak!
Lord's sake, the fellow doesn't know if he —
Have you forgot?

RUPRECHT. With the door-knob?

ADAM. Yes, I guess.

WALTER. When you struck down at him from out the window?

RUPRECHT. 'Twas twice, dear Sirs.

ADAM. The scoundrel! He remembered! (*He drinks*).

WALTER. What, twice? With two such blows you might have slain
The man, you know —

RUPRECHT. If I had slain him, then
I should have had him. That's just what I'd have wished.
If he lay dead before me, I could say:
'Twas he, dear Sirs, I have not lied to you.

ADAM. Yes, dead! I do believe. But thus — (*He fills a glass*).

WALTER. Could you not recognize him in the dark?

RUPRECHT. Not the least bit. How could I, gracious Sir?

ADAM. Why don't you keep your eyes unbarred? Your health!

RUPRECHT. My eyes unbarred! I had them open wide.
The devil filled them full of sand.

ADAM (*mumbling*). Full o' sand!
Why do you keep your big eyes open then?
Here, gracious Sir: To what we love! Your health!

WALTER. To what is right and good and true, Judge Adam!
(*They drink*).

ADAM. And now the last one, if it please your Honor.
(*He fills the glasses*).

WALTER. You surely visit now and then, Judge Adam,
Frau Martha's house. Now tell me, please,

Who frequents there besides that fellow Ruprecht?

ADAM. Not very often, if it please your Honor;
And who might frequent there I cannot say.

WALTER. What? Do you not at times go visiting
The widow of your friend deceased?

ADAM. No; for a fact it's very seldom.

WALTER. Frau Martha!
Have you fallen out with Justice Adam here?
He says he does not visit in your house?

FRAU MARTHA. Hm! gracious Sir, fallen out? It's not quite that.
I think he's still a good old friend of ours,
And yet I cannot boast that this old friend
Comes frequently to visit in our house.
Nine weeks have passed since last he entered there,
And then he only happened in in passing.

WALTER. What's that?

FRAU MARTHA. What's what?

WALTER. Nine weeks you say?

FRAU MARTHA. Yes, nine;
Next Thursday will be ten. He wished to ask
Me for some cowslip and carnation seeds.

WALTER. And—Sundays—when he goes out to his farm—?

FRAU MARTHA. Oh then, he looks in through the window then,
And says good day to me and to my daughter too,
And on his way proceeds immediately.

WALTER (*aside*). Hm! Can it be I've done the man —
(*He drinks*). I thought
Since you, at times, in your affairs have need
To ask the maiden's service, you would show
Your thanks, at times, by visiting with her mother.

ADAM. How's that, most gracious Sir?

WALTER. How's that? You said
The maiden helped, at times, to cure your chickens,
The sick ones, on your farm. Did she not give
Advice to you in this affair today?

FRAU MARTHA. Yes, to be sure, most gracious Sir, she did.
Two days ago he sent a guinea fowl
To our house sick. Grim death had gripped its frame;
A year ago she saved one with the pip,
And this one too she hopes to cure by cramming.

But he has ne'er appeared to render thanks.

WALTER (*confused*). Fill up, Sir Justice Adam. Do so, please.
Fill up at once. We'll have another drink.

ADAM. I'm at your service. It gives me pleasure. Here!
(*He fills the glasses*).

WALTER. To your prosperity! — Sir Justice Adam,
Sooner or later will surely come.

FRAU MARTHA. Think so? I doubt it.
If I could serve such Nierensteiner wine
As you drink now, and which my husband, too,
The gate-keeper had in his cellar at times
Then would our friend, the Judge, act differently:
But I, poor widow that I am, have naught
That might allure him in my house.

WALTER. So much the better.

ELEVENTH SCENE.

LIGHT *and* FRAU BRIDGET, *with a periwig in her hand.*
The MAIDS. *The preceding characters.*

LIGHT. Here, Frau Bridget, come in.

WALTER. Is that the woman, Mr. Clerk?

LIGHT. That's she. That is Frau Bridget, please your Honor.

WALTER. So then. Let's make an end of this case now.
Clear the table, girls.
(*The* MAIDS *carry out the glasses, etc.*).

ADAM (*in the interim*). Now, Eve, listen.
You roll that pill correctly, if you please;
Just as is right, and we shall have this evening
A dish of finest carp out at your house.
It must go whole right down the rascal's throat.
If it's too large, then let him choke to death.

WALTER (*catches sight of the periwig*). What is that periwig which Frau Bridget
Is bringing?

LIGHT. Sir?

WALTER. What sort of wig is it that woman's
Bringing here?

LIGHT. Hm!
WALTER. What?
LIGHT. Beg pardon —
WALTER. Well, can't I know?
LIGHT. If now your Honor will kindly
But have our Judge interrogate this woman,
You soon will know to whom the wig belongs;
And, without doubt, much more will be disclosed.
WALTER. I do not care to know to whom it belongs.
How did the woman get it? Where did she find it?
LIGHT. She found the periwig high in the trellis
Out at Frau Martha Rull's. It hung impaled
Just like a nest among the grape-vine's tangles,
Close by the window where the maiden sleeps.
FRAU MARTHA. At my house? In my trellis?
WALTER (*secretly*). Sir Justice Adam,
Have you aught to confide in me,
Then, please, to save the honor of this court,
Be good enough to tell me now.
ADAM. I, in you — ?
WALTER. No? Have you naught? —
ADAM. Upon my honor —
(*He seizes the periwig*).
WALTER. Here, this periwig, is it not yours?
ADAM. Here, this periwig, dear Sirs, is mine!
That is the self-same one — by Heaven and Earth! —
Which I gave to that boy a week ago
To bring to Master Flour down there in Utrecht.
WALTER. What? Whom?
LIGHT. To Ruprecht?
RUPRECHT. Me?
ADAM. Have I, you rascal,
Not given to you in trust this periwig
To bring to the barber to be cleaned
When you, a week ago, set out for Utrecht?
RUPRECHT. If you — ? Well, yes! You gave me —
ADAM. Why didn't you then
Deliver it, you rascal, as you should?
Why did you not deliver it to the master
There in his workshop as I ordered you?
RUPRECHT. Why did I not — ? God — Heaven's thunder!

Damn!
I did deliver it into his shop.
And Master Flour took it —

ADAM. Delivered it?
And now it hangs out in Frau Martha's grape-vine?
Oh wait, you brat! You can't escape me thus.
It seems to me there's masquerading here.
And mutiny perhaps. Will you allow
That I at once make inquiry of this woman?

WALTER. You say you had the wig — ?

ADAM. Most honored Sir,
When that young fellow there, on Tuesday last,
Drove with his father's ox-team into Utrecht,
He came into the court and said: "Judge Adam,
Have you some errands to be done in town?"
"My son", I said, "if you will be so kind,
Then take this wig to town to be repaired."
I did not say: Go keep it at your house
And use it later to disguise yourself
And leave it hanging out in Martha's trellis.

FRAU BRIDGET. Dear Sirs, so please your Honor, I think 'twas not
Our Ruprecht, for when yestere'en I went
Out to the farm to visit with my cousin,
Who lies quite ill with child, I heard this girl
Back in the garden scolding someone hoarsely —
Both rage and fear, it seems, stole 'way her voice:
"Fie, shame on you, you low-down fellow, you,
What do you mean? Away! I'll call my mother,"
As if the Spaniards were with us again.
Then: "Eve", I cry out through the hedge, "Oh Eve!"
"What's troubling you? What's up?" — Then all is still.
"Well, won't you answer me?" — "What is it, auntie?"
"What are you doing?", I ask. — "What do you think?"
"Is it your Ruprecht?" — "Oh yes, of course, it's Ruprecht."
"So run along your way." Then go to grass.
And so I thought: 'Tis but a lover's quarrel.

FRAU MARTHA. And then — ?

RUPRECHT. And then — ?

WALTER. Hush! Let the woman finish.
FRAU BRIDGET. When later I was coming from the farm,
About the middle of the night, and was
Just in the linden lane by Martha's garden,
A fellow rushes past me with bald head
And with a horse-like foot, and after him
A stink like steam from pitch and hair and sulphur.
I pray "God be with us" and then I turn
Around quite terrified, and lo! my Soul!
That pate, high Sirs, was just then disappearing,
And like decaying wood lit up the lane.
RUPRECHT. What! Heavens! The deuce — !
FRAU MARTHA. Are you really mad, Frau Briggy?
RUPRECHT. You think it was the devil — ?
LIGHT. Be still!
FRAU BRIDGET. My Soul!
I guess I know what I have seen and smelled.
WALTER (*impatient*). Woman, I will not seek to learn if it was the devil,
For against him we cannot prefer a charge.
If you can name some other person, good;
But from that sinner there you sure must spare us.
LIGHT. Will you, Your Honors, let the woman finish?
WALTER. Stupid folk, this!
FRAU BRIDGET. Good, just as you will.
But Mister Light, your Clerk, can bear me witness.
WALTER. What? You, a witness?
LIGHT. To some extent, indeed.
WALTER. Forsooth, I know not —
LIGHT. Humbly I beg you
Not to disturb the woman in her story.
I do not dare assert it was the devil;
But that about the horselike foot, the stink
That followed and the baldish pate,
Unless I err, is the whole truth. — Go on.
FRAU BRIDGET. When I today learned with astonishment
Of what had happened at Frau Martha Rull's
And, to detect the breaker of the jug,
Whom I that night had met there by the trellis,
Examined close the place where he had jumped,
I found, dear Sirs, some tracks there in the snow,

But oh, what kind of tracks they are, dear Sirs!
At the right, a fine and sharp and well-marked
And real and genuine human foot,
At the left, one lacking form, quite coarse and clumsy,
A monster-like, a clod-like horse's foot.

WALTER (*vexed*). Mere gossip, foolish, insane, damnable—!

VEIT. It can't be possible, woman!

FRAU MARTHA. Yes, by my faith!
First by the trellis, where the leap took place,
See! a wide circle trodden in the snow,
As if a sow had wallowed 'round in it.
And human foot and horses's foot from here,
And human foot and horse's foot and human foot and horse's foot
Right through the garden and throughout the world.

ADAM. Be damned! — Has not that rogue, perhaps, made bold,
Disguised in devil's wise — ?

RUPRECHT. What? I?

LIGHT. Hush! Hush!

FRAU BRIDGET. The hunter who seeks the badger and finds its tracks
Is not more jubilant than I was then.
Your Clerkship Light, said I, for then I saw
That worthy man come to me, sent by you,
Adjourn, adjourn the session of the court.
The breaker of the jug you cannot judge,
For he can sit in no worse place than hell.
Here is the trail which he has left behind.

WALTER. And have you thus convinced yourself?

LIGHT. Your Honor,
That which concerns the tracks is the whole truth.

WALTER. A horse's foot?

LIGHT. Foot of a human being,
But *praeter propter* like a horse's hoof.

ADAM. My Soul, dear Sirs, this matter seems in earnest.
So many biting words have been composed
Which would deny that any God exists;
And yet, for all I know, no Atheist
Has ever clearly proved there is no devil.
The case before us seems to be most worthy

Of a special investigation. Therefore I
Propose, before we form a judgement,
To inquire of the Synod in the Hague
Whether this court is privileged to assume
That it was Beelzebub who broke this jug.

WALTER. A proposition such as you might make.
And what do you think, Clerk?

LIGHT. Your Honor will not
Have any need of synod to decide.
Complete — if it's allowed — your own account,
You, Frau Bridget, there; and then this case, I hope,
Out of its own connections, will be cleared.

FRAU BRIDGET. And then I said: Your Clerkship Light, let us
Trace down these tracks a little so as to see
To where the devil may have made escape.
"Good", says he, "Frau Bridget, a good idea.
Perhaps we won't go so far astray,
If we go straight to Village Justice Adam."

WALTER. Well? And now you found — ?

FRAU BRIDGET. Now first we found,
Beyond the garden, in the linden lane,
The place, where, letting off his sulphurous vapors,
The devil had bumped into me: a circle,
As a shy dog might yield unto a cat
When she sits down and faces him and spits.

WALTER. Then further?

FRAU BRIDGET. Not far from there, there stands his monument,
Against a tree, that I must frighten 'fore it.

WALTER. A monument? What?

FRAU BRIDGET. What? Yes, there you will —

ADAM (*aside*). Be cursed, my abdomen.

LIGHT. Please, pass that by.
I beg you pass that by, Frau Bridget, please.

WALTER. I wish to know to what the tracks did lead!

FRAU BRIDGET. To what? My word! The straightest way to you,
Just as your Clerkship Light has said.

WALTER. To us? Right here?

FRAU BRIDGET. From the linden lane, indeed,
To the village green, along the old carp pond,

Across the bridge, then through the cemetery,
Then, here, I say, to Village Justice Adam.

WALTER. To Village Justice Adam?

ADAM. Here to me?

FRAU BRIDGET. To you, yes.

RUPRECHT. But the devil surely cannot
Dwell in the Court of Justice?

FRAU BRIDGET. In truth, I know not
If he dwells here within this house, but here
He's paid a visit, or I'm no honest woman:
His tracks lead to your threshold in the rear.

ADAM. Could he perchance have passed through here — ?

FRAU BRIDGET. Yes, perhaps, passed through. May be. That's so.
The tracks out front —

WALTER. And were there tracks out front?

LIGHT. Out front, so please your Honor, there were no tracks.

FRAU BRIDGET. Oh yes, out front, the road was trodden down.

ADAM. Was trodden down. Passed through. Well I'll be damned!
That rogue has put one over on the court.
Mark that! And I'm no honest man if there
Won't be some stink when we check up the records.
If my accounts are found to be confused,
— I do not doubt they will — then on my honor,
I shall and will not vouch for anything.

WALTER. Nor I.
(*aside*). I don't know. Was it at the left?
Or the right? I know one of his feet.
Your Honor, lend me your snuff-box, if you please.

ADAM. Snuff-box?

WALTER. Snuff-box. Hand it here!

ADAM (*to* LIGHT). Give't to the District-Judge.

WALTER. Why such ado? It only takes one step.

ADAM. It's done already. Here give it to His Honor.

WALTER. I wished to whisper something in your ear.

ADAM. Perhaps we'll have a chance a little later. —

WALTER. All right.

(*After* LIGHT *has seated himself*).

But tell me now, dear Sirs, is there any one

In town with ill-shaped feet?

LIGHT. Hm! To be sure there's someone here in Huisum—

WALTER. So? Who?

LIGHT. Well, won't your Honor but ask our Village Judge?

WALTER. The Village Justice Adam?

ADAM. I know of none.
Ten years I've held this office here in Huisum;
For all I know there's naught but has grown straight.

WALTER (*to* LIGHT). Whom do you mean?

FRAU MARTHA. Well you just put your feet out here!
Why do you hide them under your desk in fear,
That one 'most thinks 'twas you who made the tracks?

WALTER. Who? Your Justice Adam?

ADAM. Who? I? The tracks?
Am I the devil? Is that a horse's foot?
(*He shows his left foot*).

WALTER. Upon my word. That foot is good.
(*Secretly*).
Now close this session of the court at once.

ADAM. If the devil had a foot the like of that
Then he could go and dance at all the balls.

FRAU MARTHA. I say so, too. Where will the Village Judge—

ADAM. Oh what! I!

WALTER. Put an end to this at once.

FRAU BRIDGET. The only scruple which is left, dear Sirs,
Is caused, methinks, by this grave ornament.

ADAM. What is then this grave — ?

FRAU BRIDGET. Here, this periwig!
Who ever saw the devil in such garb?
A loftier structure and more steeped in grease
Than a cathedral deacon wears when preaching.

ADAM. We, in this country, know but incompletely
What is the style in Hell, our good Frau Bridget!
They say he usually wears his own poor hair,
But here on earth, I'm surely quite convinced,
He gladly hides beneath a periwig
To gain admission to exclusive groups.

WALTER. Oh worthless man! Worthy to be driven
Out of this court disgraced before this people!
The honor of this court alone protects you.
Now close this session!

ADAM. I hope that you will not —
WALTER. You hope for nothing. Retire from this case!
ADAM. Could you believe that I, the Judge, last even,
Had left my wig there hanging in the grape-vine?
WALTER. No, God forbid! Your wig's gone up in smoke,
Like Sodom and Gomorrah, I believe.
LIGHT. Or rather, gracious Sir, I beg your pardon,
The cat has borne her litter in his wig.
ADAM. Dear Sirs, if now appearances condemn me,
I beg you not to act too hastily.
To me it means either honor or disgrace.
So long as Eve is mum I fail to see
What right you have to put the blame on me.
I sit here on the Judge's bench in Huisum
And lay this wig before me on the bench,
And him who says that it belongs to me
I'll hail before the highest court in Utrecht.
LIGHT. Hm! The periwig fits you, though, my Soul!
As if it long had grown upon your scalp.
(*He sets the wig on him*).
ADAM. Such calumny!
LIGHT. But doesn't it?
ADAM. It's far too large
To cloak my shoulders, let alone my head.
(*He looks at himself in a mirror*).
RUPRECHT. Oh such a devil-of-a-fellow!
WALTER. Quiet, you!
FRAU MARTHA. Oh such a damned, accursèd judge he is!
WALTER. Once more; will you now end this case or shall I do it?
ADAM. Yes, what is your wish?
RUPRECHT (*to* EVE). Eve, speak: is't he?
WALTER. What do you mean by that, you shameless boy?
VEIT. Hush, boy, I say.
ADAM. Wait, monster, I'll get you!
RUPRECHT. Oh you damned horse-foot rogue!
WALTER. Ho there, the bailiff!
VEIT. Shut up, I say!
RUPRECHT. Wait, I'll get you today!
Today you'll throw no sand into my eyes.
WALTER. Have you not sense enough, Sir Judge — ?

ADAM. Yes, if your Honor
Allows then I will now pronounce the sentence.
WALTER. Good; do it. Pronounce it.
ADAM. The case has now been proven.
And Ruprecht there, the rascal, is the culprit.
WALTER. That's good. Go on.
ADAM. His neck I do condemn
To wear the irons, and since he has made bold,
With conduct unbecoming to his judge,
I'll throw him into jail behind the bars.
How long I shall determine later.
EVE. My Ruprecht — ?
RUPRECHT. Throw me into jail?
EVE. In irons?
WALTER. Put by your cares, my children. — Are you finished?
ADAM. The jug, I say, he may replace or not.
WALTER. 'Tis well. The session now is at an end.
And Ruprecht will appeal to the Higher Court in Utrecht.
EVE. He shall, shall he, appeal his case in Utrecht?
RUPRECHT. What? I?
WALTER. The devil, yes! And until then —
EVE. And until then —
RUPRECHT. Shall I remain in prison?
EVE. His neck in irons? Are you a Justice, too?
That shameless fellow there; yes, there he sits,
'Twas he himself —
WALTER. You hear? The devil! Shut up!
Till then no one shall harm one hair —
EVE. Up, Ruprecht!
The Justice Adam 'twas who broke the jug!
RUPRECHT. Oh, you wait!
FRAU MARTHA. He?
FRAU BRIDGET. He there?
EVE. Yes, he! Up, Ruprecht!
He was with your Eve yesterday!
Up! Seize him! Smite him now, just as you wish.
WALTER (*stands up*). Halt there! Whoever here disorder—
EVE. That's nothing!
You've earned your irons. Go, Ruprecht!

Go, knock him down from his high tribune there.
ADAM. Your pardon, Sirs. (*Runs away*).
EVE. Here! Up!
RUPRECHT. Hold him!
EVE. Be quick!
ADAM. What?
RUPRECHT. Damned lame old devil!
EVE. You get him?
RUPRECHT. Hell and damnation! No!
It's but his cloak, not he!
WALTER. Go! Call the bailiff!
RUPRECHT (*strikes the cloak*). Rat! There's one. And rat! And rat! Another.
And still another. I mean that for your back.
WALTER. You ill-bred scamp! I must have order here!
And if you don't keep quiet now at once,
You'll face the sentence with the irons today.
VEIT. Be calm, you wretched scoundrel, you!

TWELFTH SCENE.

The preceding characters without ADAM.
They all gather on the forward part of the stage.

RUPRECHT. Oh my dear Eve!
How shamefully I've offended you today!
Oh Heaven and Hell! Oh plague! and yesterday, too!
Oh you, my golden girl, bride of my heart!
Can you forgive me ever in this life?
EVE (*throws herself at the feet of the District Judge*).
Sir, if you won't help us, we are lost!
WALTER. Are lost? And why I pray?
RUPRECHT. Great God! What's up?
EVE. Oh save my Ruprecht from the conscript's fate!
For this next draft, Justice Adam has confided
To me in secret, goes to the Eastern Indies.
And from that place, you know, of every three
That go, but one man comes back home alive.
WALTER. What? East Indies? Have you lost your sense?

EVE. To Bantam, gracious Sir; deny it not!
Here is the edict, a quiet, secret order,
Concerning the militia, lately issued,
By our own government to cover this point.
You see, I am informed of the whole scheme.

WALTER (*takes the letter and reads it*). Oh such unheard-of rascally deceit! —
That edict's false!

EVE. False?

WALTER. False, as sure as fate!
Your Clerkship Light, you tell us: Is that the order
Which recently was sent to you from Utrecht?

LIGHT. The order! What! That sinner! Oh! A scrap
Of paper, drafted by him in his own hand! —
The troops they now recruit are surely meant
For service within the boundaries of this land,
And no one thinks of sending them to the Indies.

EVE. No? Do they not, dear Sirs?

WALTER. Upon my honor!
And as a proof of this, my word I'll buy
Your Ruprecht free if what you say be so!

EVE (*stands up*). Oh Heavens! How that villain lied to me!
For with most frightful care he plagued my heart,
And came when it was night to force on me
A testimonial for my Ruprecht's sake.
He showed how falsely documented illness
Could free him from all military service,
Explaining and assuring thus he sneaked
Into my room to finish the document,
Demanding from me such disgraceful favors
As a maiden's mouth, dear Sirs, dares not repeat!

FRAU BRIDGET. Oh, good-for-nothing, scandalous deceiver!

RUPRECHT. Come, let that horse's hoof alone, sweet child!
Yes, had a horse destroyed that jug of yours
I'd be more jealous than I am right now.
(*They kiss each other*).

VEIT. I say so, too! Kiss and make up like lovers.
Whitsunday, if you will, you may get married!

LIGHT (*at the window*). Look how our Justice Adam, I beg you, look,
O'er hill and dale, as if he fled from gallows

And rack, stamps through the ploughed-up winter-field!

WALTER. What? Is that Justice Adam?

LIGHT. Of course, it is!

SEVERAL. And now he's on the highway. Look! Just look! How his old wig is whipping at his back!

WALTER. Make haste, Sir Clerk, away! And bring him back!
Lest he, in mending, make the evil worse.
Of course, I do suspend him from his office
And place you in it, till all things are settled,
To manage the affairs here in this village.
If his accounts are straight, as I hope they are,
I shall not force him to desert this place.
Go! Be so kind, and bring him back again!
(LIGHT *exit*).

LAST SCENE.

The preceding characters without LIGHT.

FRAU MARTHA. But tell me, righteous Sir, where can I find
The seat of government in Utrecht?

WALTER. Wherefore, Frau Martha?

FRAU MARTHA (*peevishly*). Hm! Wherefore? — Don't know —
Can my jug not, perhaps, find justice there?

WALTER. Oh pardon me! Of course! On the market-place.
And sessions are held on Tuesday and on Friday.

FRAU MARTHA. It's good! Next week will surely find me there.

(*All exeunt*).

THE END.

America and Her Intellectuals

By Leo Ferrero

Translated from the French
By Frances Keene

"America has only begun to criticize herself since the war", writes Van Wyck Brooks . . . There is nothing comparable in the whole of modern history to the enthusiasm with which the passengers have praised the American ship of state. With the exception of men like Mark Twain, Henry Adams, and, since the war, the communists and left-wing writers, American intellectuals have always shown themselves uniformly satisfied with their civilization.

Franklin holds up a pretty mirror to his people in which he can admire himself at leisure. Emerson expresses in ringing phrases the virile theory of self-reliance. In order to identify himself with his race, William James, that delicate neurasthenic, sick with introspection, sacrifices his soul and, what is most precious in life, his integrity. He forces himself to conceive and build a sort of philosophy of pioneers, pragmatism, which each and every American can adopt without hesitation, and in which the practical instincts of business men receive the chrism of wisdom.

In this torrent of consent, one seeks in vain the furious reaction of a Nietzsche, a Schopenhauer, a Heine, a Dante, a Renan, a Gobineau, the sacred rage of the biblical prophets against the chosen people.

Is one to conclude from this that America is a paradise, not for men of action, but for intellectuals? That those who wish to live at peace in the realm of knowledge need only settle themselves on the hundredth floor of a sky-scraper?

Declarations of love are seldom a proof of love, and I suspect women who repeat too often "I love you". In general, when a man loves his country he is dissatisfied with her. Like children who suffer if their parents are not perfect in all things because they revere them as absolute, the intellectuals have always had the habit of chastening their country with their fire. He can know nothing of human psychology who has not felt Dante's wounded and offended

love in his apostrophes against Italy, "whore of the provinces" and "hostelry of sorrow". Love begets fury. And a lack of fundamental contacts provokes only an attempt at love. The uniform enthusiasm of the writers does not prove, according to my way of thinking, that they have identified themselves with America, but that they have sought to do so and failed.

The case of William James is the most perfect example of this secret tragedy. His brother Henry had the strength to break with his country from the very start: he settled in London. But William was a more sensitive plant. He dared not give up the warmth of a familiar haven. He invented a philosophic system to prove that he was indeed a true American. He divided men, as we all know, into two types: the tender-minded and the tough-minded, the weak and the strong. Under the first classification would come the rationalists, the intellectuals, the idealists, the optimists, the religious, the dogmatists, and so on. Under the second, the empirics, sensationists, materialists, the irreligious, fatalists, etc. This division is so obviously arbitrary and lacking in psychological consistency that we must accept it as a confession: the *tender-minded* represented vividly what William James was, the *tough-minded* what he would become.

William James succeeded in convincing himself. He asked from his philosophy its "cash value", just as the pioneer demanded good service from his plough. But this system threatened to collapse as soon as its architect crossed the Atlantic. And the tough-minded became once more tender, the American felt himself dangerously akin to the old world, America seemed to him "sad, very sad, because so empty", and he promised himself never to leave it again unless he were sure of being able to settle himself elsewhere until his death.

The case of William James is symbolic. After a life spent filling in the gulf between America and himself, George Santayana left for Rome. But those who have stayed in their native land and have not, like Dreiser, sought solace in criticism, the writers, the philosophers, even the painters, all have made strenuous efforts to discover within themselves points of contact with American civilization. Take,

for example, I shan't say Dewey, who is a pragmatist, but Waldo Frank. He seeks to drown his nervousness and restlessness in the marvelous dream of a triumphant America, extending from Alaska to Patagonia. Expecting a refusal, he prefers to ask for too much rather than too little.

I had the good fortune to meet and know rather intimately an extraordinary American who is at once anthropologist, linguist, musician, poet and psychiatrist. As nervous as the needle of a compass, and gifted with a marvelous facility of expression, he seems to resolve the complications and appease the torments of an extremely difficult interior life in a flood of conversation. Sceptic and relativist as are the greater number of anthropologists, anxious to be as honest as possible with himself and to believe nothing by chance, working ceaselessly to purge his mind of its prejudices and to maintain a perpetually unstable equilibrium, he smiles, usually with melancholy, hoping to find who knows what solace in human sympathy. Too much the artist, too intuitive, too encyclopedic to please his colleagues with whom he lives, he reacts against their coldness by seeking to convince himself that he incarnates the *American type*. Psychologists have enough penetration to find themselves out; but they have also enough imagination to invent and create themselves. The man of whom I have been speaking has succeeded, heaven only knows how, in reconciling his religion of sincerity with his need for sympathy which forces him to adopt "Americanism" willy-nilly. He defends with socratic ability the conquests, the myths and even the prejudices of the industrial civilization with which he has so much difficulty in identifying himself. And, wiser than William James, he takes care never to go to Europe.

* * * * *

How is one to explain the persistence and the asperity of the conflict between America and the intellectuals?

It is attributable to the fact that if, on the one hand, the governing classes reject the intellectuals, on the other, the masses make their life equally impossible.

American public opinion is not opposed to the existence of masterpieces; indeed, it is ready to admire them. But it maintains that intellectuals must not be distinguishable from other men in their private lives; they must be "regular

men", with the tastes, passions, customs, virtues and limitations of the common man.

I recall having noted who knows how many inexpressible wounds in reading between the lines of a book on America published recently by a highly cultivated author. This unfortunate felt called upon to make a declaration of faith on every page in his character as good American and perfect democrat; he recalls that he was formerly a business man and, when he must admit an interest in archaic Greek art, he makes excuses. More accurately, he excuses himself at first, then vindicates in advance his right, in the face of a hostile public, to interest himself in archaic Greek art; finally, he admires himself for this taste with a naïveté which is as embarrassing as is his humility — excessive in his excuses as in his satisfaction.

Actually, the intellectuals can assert their egos with violence, exile themselves, or adopt a self-ennobled Americanism. These three solutions are all equally painful. But everywhere, except in France and perhaps in China, the lot of the intellectual is to be a stranger in his own country. America is, in this respect, only the enlarging mirror of the world and its miseries.

* * * * *

At New Haven, not a stone's throw from the University, there is a cemetery. The trees which shade it are few and far between, and no statue embellishes the tombs. The slabs and stones which line the avenues only seek to remind the living of the virtues of the dead by banal phrases bought ready-made from some merchant of epitaphs. But the calm is profound, the silence absolute, and one is out of reach of the radio and the automobile. No one comes to lay flowers on the tombs and I have no way of knowing whether this is because the dead who are buried there have no more descendants or because their descendants neglect them. I met but one person there and that to my own grief.

I had acquired the habit of walking in the cemetery, for it was the only place near the University where one could go to collect one's thoughts; and besides, since I had discovered the tomb of Louisa, daughter of Louisa, "lovely and beloved", who died at seventeen, I felt a sort of duty to her memory. I was, I think, the only man who had made

a pious pilgrimage to that poor young girl's grave in many years.

But lo and behold! one day an old man pursued me in the cemetery uttering threatening cries, and he interrupted the train of my thoughts; he was dressed all in black and had come out of the caretaker's lodge like a wood-louse emerging from a wall. "What are you doing here?" he asked. And without waiting for my answer, he showed me — definitive argument — his detective's badge. "Go away", he added, looking at me with manifest suspicion. "A woman came awhile back and ran away frightened; she said any man who walks up and down in a graveyard is bound to be crazy. Go away".

And that is how I came to be expelled from my cemetery.

The conflict between the caretaker and the harmless stroller symbolizes admirably and places in high relief, the conflict between American society and the élite.

Public opinion, "what one must not do", is free enough on the surface, but it represses with vigor any attempt at an independent life on the part of any individual. The controlling classes themselves must respect the laws of the masses; their conformism is the price of their power. The President of the United States is a dictator in comparison to the President of the Republic, but he would be lost if, like M. Laval, he insisted on wearing a white tie when it was no longer the fashion to do so! They still tell the story of a great American politician who risked his career because he refused to buy ready-made clothes!

This tyranny of public opinion leaves politicians, bankers and industrialists relatively untouched, however. They bow to its superficial demands and keep the essentials, money and power. But it makes life hard indeed, not to say impossible, for the intellectual.

Average America is not in the habit of walking in cemeteries, and so one can't walk in a cemetery without being taken for a madman. American intellectuals live in the vague fear of being expelled from their cemetery. One may well imagine, after reading my fable, what would happen to them if they persisted, like Henry James and Santayana, in going to Europe to look for cemeteries where one had the

right to enter without first being dead.

A work of art, a philosophic concept, these are not the product of a working day limited to the hours between nine in the morning and five at night; they must be pondered unceasingly, they demand a constant orientation of the spirit. An intellectual who passes a part of his life in the realm of pure knowledge where his will-to-live becomes necessarily of secondary importance, cannot endure rules and limitations imposed by others.

The American intellectuals who live admired and acclaimed in the midst of their fellow-citizens, are obliged to accomplish the impossible: that is, to live in two places at once, awaiting the day when they can identify themselves with their own natures.

* * * * *

The ruling classes in America have killed the élite in order to preserve money and power. And America is losing ground because she has no longer an élite. But she will only be saved when her ruling classes have the courage and the honesty to examine their consciences, for the first time since 1787, and allow the élite to live. The present crisis may be beneficent in the end. In order to understand that the ideal of a superior life has a positive value, man must suffer.

LOOKING AHEAD

Some think that Europe will become Americanized. As for me, I think that America is going to turn more and more toward Europe, that she will pattern herself more and more after Europe. Two radical changes have taken place in recent years: immigration has been interrupted, and limits have been discovered.

Europeans who make fun of Americans are not aware that "Americans" are ninety per cent Europeans, and what Europeans! The worst. One can deduce the calibre of the immigrants from the form they must fill out to enter the country. During a full century a small Anglo-Saxon group has had to stem and restrain this human tide. It is no wonder if the principles on which it has operated in order to assimilate and discipline this group have been elementary. One had to begin at the beginning. American infantilism is no more than the over-simplification and crudeness of an

organization which is still in its first stages of development. If a mob settled down around you, you wouldn't begin by teaching them Greek but by teaching them to bathe, not to spit, and to speak the common idiom: that's what they do with the soldiers in the army.

When one considers that immigration was not really restricted until 1929, one can easily understand that the ruling class has had to impose a crude mould on this influx — and yet the mould has been working toward refinements. A European finds it difficult to live in America these days. And yet one cannot judge the civilization of the United States before another hundred years have elapsed. What will happen in that time? An élite will emerge which will move increasingly in the ascendant. And the nucleus around which the élite will grow is predominantly Anglo-Saxon. It is for that very reason more truly European than the mass of people, born in Europe, although the people who compose this group may have been born here.

The pure Americans, the Babbitts, are no more nor less than de-Europeanized foreigners who have achieved the form imposed on them by the rudimentary organization of American assimilation; they are the representatives of that type of "bearable" man which the ruling class has had to create in self-defense. In a hundred years America will have perfected its planing tools, and then one will see an America which will tend to resemble England more and more, with the added ingredient of keen Jewish intellectual vivacity.

America will turn more and more toward Europe, especially since the lyrism of the limitless, the phase of endless mass production, is over.

In 1909, at the time of the other Roosevelt, Theodore, the great "progressive", my father was impressed during his stay in America by the really lyric concept of the limitless. Everything seemed infinite in this land of plenty: the capacity to produce and consume, material progress and the progress of man. "To go forward" indefinitely, to become richer and richer, wiser and wiser, more and more powerful, to erect higher and higher sky-scrapers — this was the American plan. Everything had been sacrificed to it, including the happiness of living.

Frightened, my father had turned again toward Europe and especially toward France. He contemplated, in his great dialogue "Between Two Worlds", with a refreshed gaze and an almost tender admiration the manifestations of an older civilization which strove not to go endlessly forward but to limit itself, not to produce the maximum possible but to create beautiful and enduring works guided by the inspiration and the rigorous discipline of a few established principles.

The intoxication of the limitless, provoked by the alcohol of big business, lasted a long time. The fictitious prosperity of the war and after-war periods heightened it until it became the new drug capable of lulling the judgments of men until the last moment by its artificial euphory.

In 1925, an extremely penetrating French observer discovered nothing in America which foretold the catastrophe. "In the United States", he wrote, "the business man is naturally tempted to undertake large-scale enterprise immediately; seeking support from that broad basis which he knows will not fail him, he can rely on an enormous market which has proven until now almost limitless in its powers of absorption, and which is not only within his reach but, one might say, at his privileged command". He goes further: "Events have sought consistently to undo the prophecies of the Cassandras. The internal market which, they have claimed periodically, was about to reach its saturation point has recovered each time, and has shown a youthful appetite and capacity which even they could not discredit. Sometimes it has been a wave of immigration which has poured millions of new consumers into the country; at others, it has been the exploitation of a region hitherto undeveloped; or new clients have been made by gambling on the future, counting on the potential income of the individual in the decidedly unorthodox system of deferred payments. Each of these factors, envisaged separately, seems unusual but all have been operative for several generations without any more apparent lapse than a few brief periods of crisis. One cannot help thinking of the words of Pascal: 'Imagination will cease to conceive before nature ceases to produce.'"

Four years later, nature had ceased to produce. The Cassandras had been right.

* * * * *

Europeans look rather scornfully on the nervous breakdown of the United States, the despair to which the American people have abandoned themselves. They do not stop to think that when you run your head into a wall the force of the shock depends upon the speed at which you had been going at the time. These people who believed only a few years ago in the myth of limitless progress, these people who seemed to have, even in 1925, the capacity for infinite absorption, suddenly reached the end of their tether. They had no chance to discover their own limits before they were broken against them.

At the moment, the catastrophe seems immense, incurable and completely without apparent cause. The people feel cheated by their gods. Can it be that progress is not limitless? Is not the buying power of the public really infinite? Is this no more, perhaps, than a passing crisis? Won't the market spring back, as before, with renewed vitality? There is nothing more difficult than the necessary re-orientation. Americans had been hearing for over a century that they must go forward; how could they be expected to understand within the space of a few months that they must retrench instead? "The United States will crash", they said, desperate and terrified.

And yet the nature of things is stronger than the will of man. Periodically, higher and higher sky-scrapers can be built, and no static law can prevent, say, Rockefeller's sky-scraper from towering over the Empire State which has already triumphed over the Chrysler Building. But the moment has already come when the builders themselves will cease their struggle for supremacy in the sky: they will find no more tenants. The Empire State offers astounded Americans the spectacle of a thousand feet of unoccupied office-space.

Given this situation, the speech that Roosevelt has just made in San Francisco achieves primary importance; perhaps for the first time an American politician, candidate for the presidency, has solemnly affirmed: "The day of the great Titans of industry is past. Our job, today, is no longer that of discovering and exploiting new natural resources or of producing more and more riches".

America, in these words, finally recognizes her own

limits, and shows that she is ready to adopt, after over a century of intoxication, the sober conception of life which characterizes the European civilizations. It is not merely coincidental that this change in orientation has been publicly expressed by the candidate of the liberal party which most closely resembles European parties, and which is the least nationalized. And it is moving to hear echoed in this speech an idea of the Declaration of Independence of 1776, an idea which had been scornfully relegated to the bric-à-brac shop of sentimental principles long since outgrown: "The Declaration of Independence presents the problem of government under the aspect of a contract . . . And the last words of that high contract are about liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

HOME OF LOVE

By Miriam H. Krarup

In the lap of a golden lagoon
The shadows of clouds are at play,
In an amber and indigo noon,
In an opal and emerald day.
On the banks of the lovely lagoon
Grows a flower of the blue of the sky;
At sight of it small griefs swoon,
At scent of it sorrows die!
O flower of the soul of song!
O iris in April array!
Tell my love not to linger long;
Whisper; "Love of mine; do not delay!"

TESTAMENT

By Nelly Browne

Impression of man's life,
Though intricate, is brief
As the minute design
On the deciduous leaf.

Man writes his years in earth
And bitterness of stone:
Mortality of dust,
Apocrypha of bone.

THREE POEMS

By Pedro Salinas

I.

Ahora te quiero,
como el mar quiere a su agua:
desde fuera, por arriba,
haciéndose sin parar
con ella tormentas, fugas,
albergues, descansos, calmas.
¡Qué frenesíes, quererte!
¡Qué entusiasmo de olas altas,
y qué desmayos de espuma
van y vienen! Un tropel
de formas, hechas, deshechas,
galopan desmelenadas.
Pero detrás de sus flancos
está soñándose un sueño
de otra forma más profunda
de querer, que está allá abajo:
de no ser ya movimiento,
de acabar este vaivén,
este ir y venir, de cielos
a abismos, de hallar por fin
la inmóvil flor sin otoño
de un quererse quieto, quieto.
Más allá de ola y espuma
el querer busca su fondo.
Esa hondura donde el mar
hizo la paz con su agua
y están queriendose ya
sin signo, sin movimiento.
Amor
tan sepultado en su ser,
tan entregado, tan quieto,
que nuestro querer en vida
se sintiese
seguro de no acabar
cuando terminan los besos,
las miradas, las señales.
Tan cierto de no morir
como está
el gran amor de los muertos.

Translated from the Spanish
By Eleanor L. Turnbull

Now I love you
as the sea loves its water;
fashioning from it without ceasing,
from outside, from above,
storms, escapes, harbors,
quiet shelters and calms.
What madness of loving!
What raptures of high waves,
and what faintings of foam
come and go! A tumultuous
troop of dishevelled shapes, formed
and unformed, gallop towards me.
But beneath the surface
lies dreaming a dream
of ways much deeper
of loving, down there below:
a dream of ending this movement,
this going and coming, this coming
and going, from heaven to the abysses
of hell, to find at last
the constant flower without autumn
of a calm and quiet love.
Far below wave or foam
love seeks its own depths,
those profundities where the sea
makes peace with its water,
and where these are loving indeed
without sign, without movement.
Love
so buried in its innermost being,
so submissive, so quiet,
that our loving in life
might feel
certain of never ending
when end our kisses,
our glances, our tokens;
as certain of never dying
as is
the great love of the dead.

II.

Si la voz se sintiera con los ojos
¡ay, cómo te vería !
Tu voz tiene una luz que me ilumina,
luz del oir.
Al hablar
se encienden los espacios del sonido,
se le quiebra al silencio
la gran oscuridad que es. Tu palabra
tiene visos de albor, de aurora joven,
cada día, al venir a mí de nuevo.
Cuando afirmas,
un gozo cenital, un mediodía,
impera, ya sin arte de los ojos.
Noche no hay si me hablas por la noche.
Ni soledad, aquí solo en mi cuarto
si tu voz llega, tan sin cuerpo, leve.
Porque tu voz crea su cuerpo. Nacen
en el vacío espacio, innumerables,
las formas delicadas y posibles
del cuerpo de tu voz. Casi se engañan
los labios y los brazos que te buscan.
Y almas de labios, almas de los brazos,
buscan alrededor las, por tu voz
hechas nacer, divinas criaturas,
invento de tu hablar.
Y a la luz del oir, en ese ámbito
que los ojos no ven, todo radiante,
se besan por nosotros
los dos enamorados que no tienen
más día ni mas noche
que tu voz estrellada, o que tu sol.

If the voice were perceived with the eyes,
ah, how I should see you!
Your voice has a light that illumines me,
light of the hearing.
When you speak
space is lit up with the sound,
the great darkness which is silence
is broken. Your word
has gleams of dawn, of young aurora,
each day, as it comes to me afresh.
When you say yes,
a zenith of joy, a full midday
reigns, without the art of the eyes.
There is no night if you speak to me in the night;
neither solitude, here alone in my room,
if your voice reaches me, lightly thus, without body.
For your voice creates its body. There are born
in empty space innumerable
delicate and possible forms
of the body of your voice. Almost are deceived
the lips and the arms that seek you.
And phantom lips, and phantom arms
search round them, for your voice
brings to birth divine beings,
invention of your speech.
And in the light of hearing, in those confines
that the eyes do not see, all radiant,
they kiss for us
the two lovers that have no more
day and no more night
than your starry voice, or your sun.

III.

Tan convencido estoy
de tu gran traspresencia en lo que vivo,
de que la luz, la lluvia, el cielo son
formas en que te esquivas,
vaga interposición entre tú y tú,
que no estoy nunca solo
mientras la luz del día me parece tu alma,
o cuando al encenderse las estrellas
me van diciendo cosas que tú piensas.
Esa gota de lluvia
que cae sobre el papel
es, no mancha morada, florida del azar,
sino vaga y difusa violeta
que tú me envías del abril que vives.

Y cuando los contactos de la noche,
masa de oscuridad, sólida masa,
viento, rumores, llegan y me tocan
me quedo inmensamente
asombrado de ver
que el brazo que te tiendo no te estrecha,
de que aun te obstines
en no mostrarte entera
tan cerca como estás, detrás de todo.
Y tengo que creer,
aunque palpitas en lo más cercano,
— sólo porque tu cuerpo no se ve —
en la vaga ficción de estar yo solo.

I am so sure that your presence
shines through all that makes up my life,
sure that the light, rain and sky
are forms in which you escape from yourself,
a vague something between yourself and yourself,
that I am never alone
while the light of day seems to me your spirit,
or when the stars being kindled,
speak to me of your thoughts.
This tiny drop of rain
which falls on my paper
is no chance purple patch of flowery vegetation,
but the delicate scattered violet
that you send me from the April you are living.

And when the contacts of the night,
mass of darkness, solid mass,
wind, sounds, reach me and touch me,
with boundless amazement
I see that the arm
I stretch out to you does not embrace you,
the while you persist in
withholding the all of yourself,
thus near to me though you are, back of all.
And only because your body is not seen,
though you pulsate in that which is nearest me,
I am forced to believe
the vague fiction of being alone.

ECSTASY

By Victor Hugo

Translated from the French
By Dorothy Wheless Anderson

Alone with the waves through a night of stars,
Not a cloud in the sky, on the sea not a sail,
My eyes plumbed the depths of intangible worlds;
Woodland and mountain and Nature's immensity
Seemed then to question, confusedly murmuring,
Waves of the sea and fires of Heaven.

And the stars of gold in their infinite legions,
Loud, low, with a thousand harmonies
Said, while inclining their crowns of fire,
And the waves of blue neither halted nor ruled
Said, as they tossed back the foam from each crest,
"It is God, Lord God."

IN THIS BELATED TWILIGHT

(*Il fera longtemps clair ce soir*)
By Comtesse de Noailles
Translated from the French
By Dorothy Wheless Anderson

Twilight will linger late tonight; the days grow long.
The strident clamor of day is muted, put to flight
And the trees, amazed at the strange white light,
Stand pensive and wakeful, half dreaming a song.

Upon the heavy golden air the chestnut trees
Scatter their perfumes, which seem to multiply
Until we dare not move nor breathe a sigh
Lest we disturb the fragrant, slumbering breeze.

Now, awakened by the city's distant roar,
It faintly stirs. Dust, uplifted like a fragile shroud,
Forsakes each weary, restless tree and in a cloud
Drifts gently down into the tranquil lanes once more.

We who have long been used to seasons, fall
And spring alike, remarking no subtle change
In life, yet find in this belated twilight a strange
Illusive essence of the soul, vanished past recall.

TWO POEMS

By Alexander Petofi

Translated from the Hungarian
By Anton N. Nyerges

WANDERERS OF LOVE

Evening's knight, the moon, arises;
In its silver wake there go
Like some faithful, little page-boys
Gleaming stars in twilight glow.

Forth I also set to wander;
Nor do I set forth alone;
With the moon are stars of evening
And with me is love full-grown.

Hasten, rising moon, O hasten
Forward to the loving night;
Swiftly I too hasten onward
To my dark-eyed, warm delight.

OVER THE VELVET COUCH OF LOVE

Over the velvet couch of love,
Which roses thickly cover,
Again my soul's ethereal wings
With gentle motions hover.
Amid the roses fully blown
What fate to me is given?
Will fragrance or a piercing thorn
Into my heart be driven?

And whether fragrance be my lot
Or e'en a thorn of sadness,
Lie down, my soul, upon the couch
And dream the dream of gladness.
Lie down and dream that wondrous word
Thou never yet hast spoken,
Which of my fervent, glowing love
Will be a burning token.

THE KINGS REMAIN

By Stanton A. Coblentz

Never the world shall be without the kings.
Though Caesar dies, and no acclaiming host
Grovels and bows to Alexander's ghost,
And Xerxes slumbers where the thistle springs,
Still now and then arrives, as though on wings,
Some champion with no roll of drums, nor boast
Of horns or flags, who takes a high-throned post
Above the swirl of casual times and things.

Often he comes unknown. The blinded throng
Cast him a rag, or coop him in a cage.
Yet with brave thrusts he stabs at foul-toothed wrong,
Kindles a lamp, or chokes a despot's rage;
Or else he gives a law, a book, a song,
To shine as sovereign for an awe-struck age.

FATHOMING RODS

By Stanton A. Coblentz

We may compute but cannot comprehend
The sun-strewn caverns of galactic space;
With light-years for our measure, we can trace
Cosmos on cosmos, whirling without end.
Although we comb the eons, and ascend
Where nebulae, many as the sea-waves, race,
The mind that charts and plots cannot embrace
The vastness of the facts the hand has penned.

And yet, for all, we tread a yielding land
When trailing moons and comets. In pursuit
Of man's locked self no fathoming rod redeems.
This, though we strive, we cannot understand;
There is no lens or graph that can compute
How genius blazes or the madman dreams.